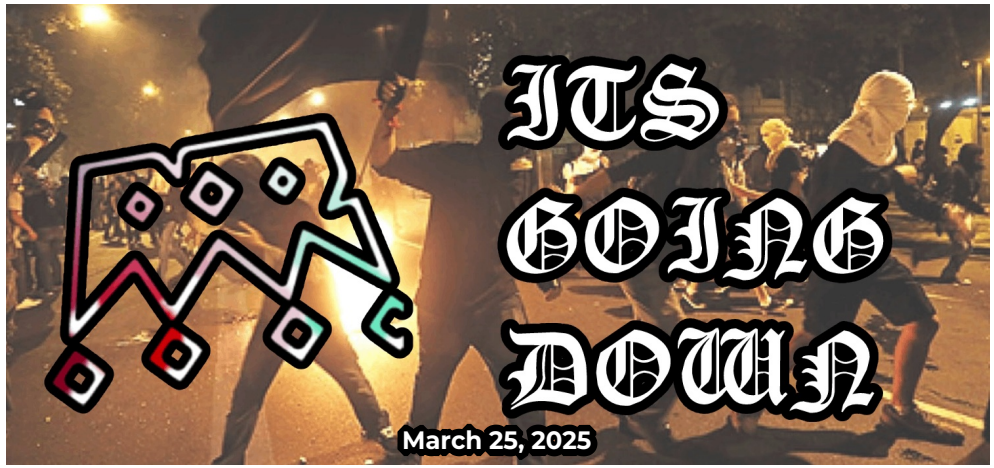


Stockton, CA: Protesters Mobilize Against Anti-LGBTQ+ Speaker

March 24, 2025

Report on recent mobilization in Stockton, CA against a far-Right, anti-LGBTQ+ speaker. To view zine PDF mentioned in this report, go here.

On Wednesday March 19th 2025, students and community in Stockton, California mobilized against a transphobic speaking event hosted by the crypto-fascist campus group Turning Point USA (TPUSA).

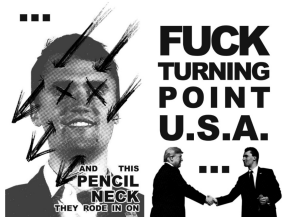
The event, titled "The Truth About Transgenderism," was hosted by the newly-formed University of the Pacific (UOP) TPUSA chapter and featured "Pastor" Junsun Yoo as its speaker. This was the first public event from UOP's TPUSA chapter, which is closely tied to Pastor Yoo's Christian student group, The Nest. This new local chapter is part of a wave of fascist activity sweeping the country, and they wasted no time hopping on the coattails of the far-Right's current scapegoating campaign against transgender people.

The event was publicly announced on March 4th. In response, a petition demanding the school cancel the event was posted to Change.org and quickly gained over two thousand signatures. Soon after, an alternative event at UOP's Center for Identity and Inclusion was organized. Scheduled at the same time as the TPUSA event, it's purpose was to provide a safe space for queer and trans students who might feel endangered.

Others took a more proactive approach. After an anonymous flyer began circulating online with the headline "No Hate in Stockton, Give TPUSA the Boot," calling for a noise demo outside the building where the transphobic presentation was being held, disparate autonomous groups independently organized a counter-protest in answer to this call.

On the evening of the TPUSA event, Stockton showed up against hate in a multi-pronged effort to oppose, disrupt, and derail the event from all sides. Outside the auditorium, a crowd of over 150 people gathered with signs, banners, trans pride flags, noisemakers, and a cardboard caricature of Charlie Kirk's face. Signs and banners read such things as "Fuck your hate," "Trans rights are human rights," and "Respect my trans homies or I'm gonna identify as a fucking problem."

Protesters chanted "No Trump, no KKK, no TPUSA!," read off a list of egregious quotes by TPUSA leadership, heckled a TPUSA streamer, and clashed with the police, who showed up with reinforcements and attempted to keep protestors in a fenced off "protest zone." Police briefly tried - and failed - to arrest a protestor and to seize a megaphone, claiming that amplified sound was prohibited. However when pressed, they were unable to cite the code supporting that claim, and still tried to enforce it - a tactic we are all too familiar with.



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After some examples of overt defiance and some negotiation amongst themselves, the initially hesitant crowd soon discovered that the police could do little to keep them cornered off, and the protest moved in unison to the grass in front of the auditorium entrance. At several points later in the night, protestors spotted police in riot gear and spread the word amongst the crowd to keep everyone safe and informed. People handed out masks, zines, and cookies, and wrote the legal number on each others' arms. Street medics stood by in case of an emergency, providing reassurance, support, and escorts for those who required it. Beautifully, organically, a fragmented crowd became a cohesive force.

Meanwhile in the auditorium, another group of protesters staged a sit-in and disrupted the event from the inside. People heckled and argued with the speaker. Many wore masks with pride flags on them, refusing to be pushed back into the closet. At one point, the power was abruptly shut off during the Q&A, cutting off Pastor Yoo's mic for a full 8 minutes as he fumbled about with sloppy arguments on gender-affirming care. According to one source, the sit-in accounted for over half of the event's audience. Many more who planned to take part in it were turned away at the door, some for not having ID, some for "not looking the part," which we can only assume to mean looking too queer or too "leftist."

After the lengthy (and no doubt boring) speech came to an end, attendees began to trickle out of the building. Protestors moved closer and began chanting "Hate has no home!," booing as attendees walked by. Some opted to leave via a side door to avoid the walk of shame past the angry crowd. Many sit-in participants came out and joined the protest, met with cheers and hugs.

Despite a shaky beginning, by the end of night the excitement and spirit of solidarity in the air was palpable. New connections were forged, rides home were offered, and we left feeling incredibly grateful for and humbled by the commitment and bravery of so many friends and total strangers, all coming together towards a common goal - to smash the seeds of reactionary hate before they can take root in our city. We must make every effort to maintain this energy for it to lead to many more blooms of rebellion against the rising tide of fascism.

All By Design

It's worth mentioning that a majority Asian-American Christian group was TPUSA's vehicle into UOP. Two Asian-American women students and an Asian-American speaker were chosen to be the public face of the event. According to TPUSA's website, two young white men lead the UOP chapter. TPUSA frequently places its non-white membership front and center to counter (valid) accusations of their racism.

Events like this one that provide a platform for hateful rhetoric, often attracting the most dangerous factions of the far-Right: Proud Boys, Patriot Front, and the Traditionalist Workers Party, open Neo-Nazis. While we can breathe a sigh of relief that none of these groups were present in force, one attendee threw a roman salute/sieg-heil to the counter-protest on his way out. This is just a taste of the what we can expect on campus and in our hometowns if groups like TPUSA set up shop.

TPUSA doesn't just attract these types - it creates them, too. The group's own fascist, white nationalist agenda is thinly-veiled but well documented. It's no mistake that they're less public about their more objectionable views. Instead they strategically choose hot button topics that have mass appeal amongst conservative Americans, (like trans athletes and gender-affirming care for minors) to reel people in and push them further to the Right. This strategy has been extremely successful, which is why TPUSA is the first stop for many college students on the pipeline to far-Right extremism.

The Coming Conflict

It is unlikely that this will be the last of these events we will see locally, and when they come we must be ready. Our trans siblings, our immigrant siblings, and our siblings of color are under attack by the state. Whether or not you identify with any of these groups, even if you feel you are in no danger under this regime, your safety is temporary.

Authoritarianism dominates. That is its function. When we say "An Attack on One is an Attack on All," we are not simply being poetic. This is demonstrable. We will either find our common interests and defend one another from this onslaught, or we will perish. This moment will not simply "pass." If it goes unopposed, it will devour everything. It will not end with a Democrat in office or the return of DEI. The US Empire will continue to intensify the level of oppression here at home the same as it does abroad. We're putting out the call - Strengthen your communities, build defense networks, organize mutual aid. Study the histories of authoritarian seizure of power and the paths they took to get there: know what we're up against. Study resistance movements, both historical and current, successes and failures: know how to fight back. There is no time for hesitation. Now is the time to act.

See you on the barricades...

- Some Anarchists

"For every person that takes one step towards Freedom, there is another who finds the road to Liberation a little easier."

photo via Screenshot from ABC 10

What I Learned from the Last Trump Presidency

March 24, 2025

Critical reflection on how lessons from the first Trump presidency can inform emerging struggles and grassroots organizing.

As we transition into another four years of Trump, there are important lessons we need to learn from in order to guide us forward. It's important to understand the root causes of this turn towards right-wing populism, to understand the deep-rooted issues that people in America are facing. Plenty of research shows that the diminishing material conditions for many Americans are in large part the motivating factors behind Trump's victory.

If we are to combat the future of fascism, here and abroad, we have to hold our ground and build a multi-racial, anti-capitalist struggle with America's working-class and forgotten people. We need to collectively fight and take down the wealthy elite by organizing towards improving the material needs of people living in the United States, by focusing on wages, housing and

food.

What I learned from the last Trump presidency is that constantly reacting to his policy changes brought us back years in regards to our political power. We found ourselves aligned with liberal Democrats which by default denied any fact that life under the Democrats was no different. If we are serious about our critiques of the Democratic Party and how they offer nothing but maintaining the status-quo, we must immediately engage in offensive measures rather than fall into the trappings of the last presidency: reacting to a barrage of executive orders.

In the last Trump presidency, we failed to build a strong movement that would offer any real alternative to right-wing populism. Instead of offering other avenues for the poor and working classes to improve their material conditions and build solidarity with one another; our reactionary tactics only succeeded in distancing us from the poor and lumped us into the liberal-elite wokism of the Democrats and their pussy hat soldiers.

Where we can grow strength right now is showing working-class people an alternative to right-wing populism, which means organizing strongly for higher wages, lower rents, healthier food, and more accessible healthcare. This is the only way that we can show people in the United States and globally, a true alternative to fascist populism.

Look to your city to see what it needs, what are the choke points and vulnerabilities, build an alternative force that will lay the path towards our collective liberation.

Photo by Jean on Unsplash

The Counter-Revolution We Earned

March 24, 2025

A look at the evolving authoritarian makeup of the second Trump presidency and the threat that it poses. Originally published at *The Now Times*.

We are now 9 weeks into the second Trump presidency. In that time, nothing has occurred that suggests we are not on the path of the Worst Case Scenario — an overtly fascist movement making moves toward an overtly fascist government. The administration has articulated its right to a Monarchical form of power in line with the strategy of the Butterfly Revolution articulated by Curtis Yarvin. There are, of course, other ideological forces. But this strategy appears to be a decisive one.

As I outlined previously, the stakes are about as high as can be imagined. Not just because of the "constitutional crisis" we are heading in, but because:

1) the administration is deploying an interpretation of the constitution that will refuse to acknowledge that crisis, arguing instead that the Executive, properly understood, is unbound by the other branches of government;

2) they appear to want to use this new monarchical power to reorganize American life and the world order. Their vision is the stuff of nightmares — the complete erasure of political freedom, the complete enclosure of public institutions into private hands, the use of AI for total surveillance and weaponry to eliminate the sliver of humanity that causes so much inconvenience for policing and "warfighting." They aim to use a Constitutional Monarchy to herd us into a Monstertutional Conarchy. The Monster Con, if you like.

There's another aspect of what is unfolding that is difficult to wrap our minds around — particularly for those on the Left who imagine that the goal of right-wing movements is to rake in profits for corporations. Surely the fact that tariffs are bad economic policy will act as a tempering force? Surely they wouldn't deliberately crash the economy, trigger a recession or even a depression? "Its the economy, stupid!"

Maybe. But note that Musk has said on numerous occasions that the economy needs to be crashed. Note that Trump, who never admits a fault, has himself said that things might be hard for a while. Run that through your euphemism machine. If we are living through a suped-up version of "disaster capitalism," it could follow, for some particularly cynical billionaires, that the US economy *needs* to be crashed. They are driven by a fantasy of a 'blank slate,' which they want in order to:

- lower expectations of workers to get them to accept jobs they otherwise wouldn't;
- justify the gutting of environmental and worker regulations to re-attract industry;
- create a situation of economic chaos not unlike the late Weimar period in which the fascist movement can position itself as the only force capable of restoring order.

If that is appears too outlandish to imagine, I just want to remind you that two of the most influential figures on the political Right today — Musk and Bannon — *have both given Nazi salutes in public*. Let it sink: we are in *that* kind of political situation.

At the wheel are people who revel in being beyond the limits, acting in ways so unbound by basic decency that it sounds crazy to even say what they are thinking. This is how they win: by their opponents being unwilling to attribute to them the audacity of evil.

Thankfully, the influence of Yarvin's ideas has begun to get attention. Unfortunately, attention is not opposition. If the plan, as Yarvin outlined it, is to force these changes through without much concern for public opinion — and to destroy or bring to heel any institution that might raise questions about the King's interpretation of law or history — then what?

In targeting Universities and the media, they are laying the condition for Trump to remake the world with his edicts, backed by physical and economic bullying. It *i s* the Gulf of America. *Maybe it always has been.*

If this is indeed the path we're on, the Democrats aren't in a position

to do much of anything about it, even if they wanted to. As a party, they have committed to "taking the high road" in all circumstances — by which I mean, they are committed to always *giving the impression they are the ones following the rules.* This was quaint for a while. It is now completely unhinged. They are trying to follow the rules of a game that the other party simply isn't playing.

Could they get hip to the new game? Not really: Monarchy is zero-sum. When sovereign power is absolute, you either have it or you don't. The best you can do is win favor with the sovereign. This amounts to becoming junior partners in the regime, a loyal opposition that can't fundamentally challenge any of the priorities.

But hold on: isn't Trump pissing off the Republican base so much that the Democrats have a chance to sweep the Midterms?

Shouldn't we just give them enough rope to hang themselves with?

My dear friend.

These are not the kind of kids who give the ball back.

Whatever you may have thought about how representative or functional or legitimate the American voting system was in the past, I am asking you to let it sink in that this system is now in the hands of people who have no qualms about tipping the scales.

Perhaps they will find it politically convenient to have elections. Perhaps not. But such elections are not going to change the hands of power.

Do you really need to see that yourself to be convinced? Haven't you seen enough? Haven't they shown you who they are?

And what do you think the sources of your news will be saying, two years from now? The zone will not simply be flooded with bullshit. A whole new zone will be made out of shit.

As I spelled out in an earlier post, all political systems rely upon a set of customs that are not themselves defined within those systems. They are simply the stuff of everyday life, expectations of honesty and good will and sharing and a commitment to dialogue in search of the truth. You could call it "democratic culture," as some have. The current fascist regime has wagered that these customs have themselves eroded to such a point that the political system they were built upon can be swept away.

Are they right? That's what we're hear to discuss. And, for those up for a challenge, we have some good news. It will take a bit of explaining, though.

Their Wagers

The Christian/Techno fascist alliance is making some very serious wagers, which could put their strategy at risk.

To name a few of the more obvious:

- That they can succeed in laying the legal and institutional framework for this transformation while people are in a state of shock, without serious popular opposition;
- That if they do receive opposition, they can nonetheless push it through with physical and economic coercion and not widespread consent;
- That Americans don't really care about or even understand the meaning of political freedom. That most people do not want to think about politics and would prefer the country to be run like a business;
- That they can rely upon a functioning apparatus of surveillance, economic blackmail, and the loyalty of paramilitaries, police, and military violence to extend their power;
- That the divide between Red and Blue worlds can be maintained and intensified, and that people will remain within these easily manipulated media bubbles;
- That they can present themselves as the best solution to the chaos they have created.

At first glance, these might sound like pretty safe bets to make. But I want to suggest that it only seems this way.

You know how, in some contexts, things feel one way and you feel one way about yourself, but when you get into a different context somehow you remember all sorts of things you are capable of?

One effect of the kind of confusion being imposed on us from above is this kind of amnesia, the situational forgetting of our own capacities. This is the first thing we need to overcome.

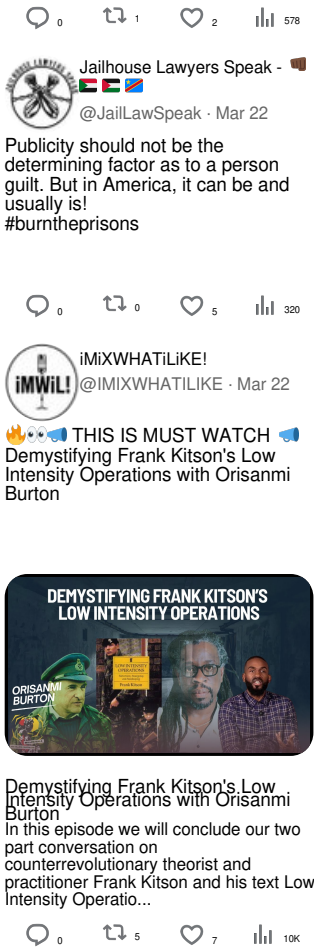
We can do this by understanding that this is a counter-revolution. These billionaires are 'reactionaries' — and they conceive themselves as reacting to the power of our social movements.

Remember the summer of 2020? It's publicly remembered as a 'largely nonviolent movement for a racial reckoning' that resulted an increased awareness of ongoing structural racism and a new wave of DEI policies. A supercharge of "wokeness" that is now under direct attack. In 2020, it felt like the triumph of a new common sense was being solidified into corporate and institutional policies around the country.

To start, I think we need a fuller perspective on that memory. That movement did not really emerge spontaneously in response to the brutal murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis. Rather, it was the culmination of a series of increasingly powerful movements stretching back at least to Occupy Wall Street in 2011. Whether you participated in them or not, I want to suggest that these movements likely affected your life by catalyzing a series of shifts in popular common sense.

Counter what Revolution?

It is easy to look at the last 15 years of uprisings and see nothing but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Jailhouse Lawyers Speak -
@JailLawSpeak · Mar 22
Publicity should not be the determining factor as to a person guilt. But in America, it can be and usually is!
#burntheprisons
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iMiXWHATiLiKE!
@IMIXWHATILIKE · Mar 22
THIS IS MUST WATCH
Demystifying Frank Kitson's Low Intensity Operations with Orisanmi Burton
DEMYSTIFYING FRANK KITSON'S LOW INTENSITY OPERATIONS
ORISANMI BURTON
Demystifying Frank Kitson's Low Intensity Operations with Orisanmi Burton
In this episode we will conclude our two part conversation on counterrevolutionary theorist and practitioner Frank Kitson and his text Low Intensity Operatio...
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certain genders. Demonstrate new constellations of the qualities and capabilities that are currently associated with one gender or another.

Third, abolish gender hierarchies. End practices that privilege one gender over another. Do away with institutions and attitudes that value some qualities and capabilities over others on account of the gender that they are associated with. If a person of any gender has to outdo all other contenders in demonstrating traditionally masculine characteristics in order to get a foothold in politics, gender oppression remains in effect even if not everyone in a position of power is a man.

Finally, abolish gender gatekeeping. Do away with the boundaries that control who can identify with any gender. Defending trans identity, gender nonconformity, and other departures from fixed binary gender is a step towards this goal.

Against patriarchy—for the free flourishing of all!

CrimethInc. Ex-Workers
@CrimethInc@todon.eu • Mar 7

We've just received the fourth printing of our introduction to anarchism, To Change Everything.

This text explores why authoritarian structures cannot solve the crises they produce and how to weave our personal revolts together into a collective struggle for liberation.

This printing brings the total number of English-language copies in circulation to 225,000. The text is also available in 32 languages, including European and American versions of both Spanish and French.

You can access the text online here:

https://crimethinc.com/tce

You can order print copies here in bulk, for the costs of paper and postage alone:

https://store.crimethinc.com/products/change-everything

Jailhouse Lawyers Speak -
@JailLawSpeak · Jul 16

Mutual Aid can be directed directly towards the inside people led Prisoners Human Rights and Jailhouse Lawyers networks/projects by cash app $ arebelsworld or Venmo @ arebelsworld

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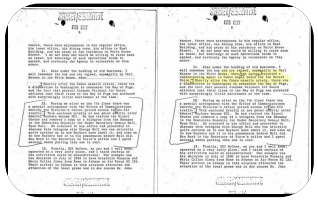
Lord Bebo
@MyLordBebo · Mar 24

The CIA mixed toxic components into Cuban sugar supplied to the Soviet Union.

Sugar can go anywhere to other countries or into the team of schoolchildren.

Why would you just poison random people?

WTF is the CIA doing?



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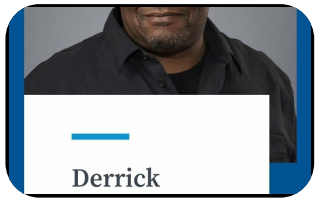
Jailhouse Lawyers Speak -
@JailLawSpeak · Mar 24

Hamilton was also forced to navigate the complicated waters of the legal system, one tortuous appeal at a time. He resorted to the only person who could effectively and tirelessly champion his cause in the courts: himself



Derrick Hamilton

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Jailhouse Lawyers Speak -
@JailLawSpeak · Mar 24

NY Jailhouse Lawyer Convicted: Manhattan jury convicts a 'jailhouse lawyer' for unlicensed practice of law, but no conspiracy.

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Ademọ́lá.
@OgbeniDemola · Mar 23

Individualism, capitalism, colonialism, imperialism— these are all western ideologies. Africans believe in Ubuntu, togetherness, spirit of community.

91 734 2K 50K

Jailhouse Lawyers Speak -
@JailLawSpeak · Mar 22

GSDear RT pinned
@cmongeo · Mar 22

@JailLawSpeak Tysm for sharing this, it's really been on my mind lately. Solidarity & and an end to prisons in our near futures.

failure, or to blame certain strategic or tactical orientations for preventing the movements from seizing and wielding power. I'd like to offer another perspective.

Maybe the best way to lay it out is to describe how people in the US tended to think about the world in public before 2011 — I say "in public" because there were always smaller groups of radicals who had a different understanding, but they were largely excluded from public discourse.

For most people, "history" was more or less over. Things like racism and patriarchy were problems that were largely struggles of the past, which had more or less been overcome. Capitalism and our democratic system were the best, or at least only viable, way for economic and political life to be organized. Our job was to find a job we liked, so we could realize our personal vision of life within these systems. We were not, on the whole, people with a transformative historical task: the great liberation struggles of history were in the past and we were now free and equal participants in the market. Let's call this "the ideological fabric of neoliberalism."

What I want to suggest is that in the wake of the financial crash of 2008, this ideological fabric was shredded by a series of social movements. We can look at each of them as introducing an insight that tore a new hole in it, allowing a new common sense to emerge. The process could be hastily summarized like this:

- *The Occupy Movement* (2011-12) taught us that capitalism is not the only or best way to organize life, and that there is something like a class war from above being waged against the vast majority of people;
- *The Ferguson Uprising* (2014) and subsequent anti-police riots in Baltimore, Charlotte, and elsewhere taught us that anti-Black racism is not over. Rather, it persists in structural forms maintained through racist policing practices that have built a system of mass incarceration;
- *The Standing Rock Rebellion* (2016) taught us that colonization and indigenous genocide is not something that happened in the past and is a tragically complete original sin that no one can do anything about. Rather, colonization is an ongoing process that is still happening today;
- *The Me Too Movement* taught us that patriarchy is not over as a result of formal legal equality and that the contemporary feminist task is far greater than closing the wage-gap. Rather, patriarchy persists in a hidden continent of sexual assault and rape that men engage in with impunity;
- *The Queer and Trans Liberation* movements taught us that the pursuit of an individual sense of happiness in the world requires the courage to liberate oneself from some of the most basic categories of who this society says we are, and discover new ways of being in the world;
- *The Climate Justice Movement* taught us that our economic system is rapidly destroying the conditions for human life on the planet, and that urgent action is required to fundamentally change the conditions of our lives.

Each of these movements forced these insights into the public arena, tearing holes in the fabric of neoliberal ideology. In doing so, they developed a new common sense in which people regained the idea that they were situated in a generation that had an historical task to remake the economic and political structures of the world.

And again and again, in each of these movements, people discovered that once they broke free of neoliberal ideology, there was another force sustaining the world as it is: the police.

Recall again the summer of 2020. As I said, it has been officially remembered as a largely non-violent movement for racial reckoning that transformed corporate ad campaigns and institutional policies. In fact, it was the George Floyd Uprising. It began with the burning of a police station and, for about 3 weeks, this country experienced the largest wave of riots in its history, many of which targeted police cars and infrastructure, paralyzing the police's ability to maintain order in multiple cities.

These few weeks at the beginning of the summer were not aberrations that can be written out of the history of that movement, nor were they actions that prevented the movement from becoming popular. Rather, they were the initial explosion of energy that dwindled as the movement became progressively more tame, less disruptive, and more guided by official nonprofits and demands for policy changes that could be won within existing institutions.

After 2020, there was a lull in Left social movements. A notable exception to this was the Stop Cop City campaign in Atlanta, which conceived itself as a continuation of that movement to prevent the construction of a new wave of police training facilities that aimed to reconstruct their public image.

But in the spring of 2024, encampments to stop the genocide in Palestine were created by students and activists at universities across the country. This movement too contributed to the process of education I am describing, teaching us that the US is still actively committed to supporting regimes conducting genocide. And that even our most "liberal" institutions are willing to self-destruct to prevent that truth from being uttered.

The intensity of the police response to the Palestinian solidarity movement suggests that a new kind of limit was hit by this movement. The commitment to supporting the state of Israel's assault on Palestinians seems to run so deep that both political parties and University administrations around the country appeared to agree that it would be better to simply destroy freedom of speech on college campuses and slander people trying to oppose a genocide than to acknowledge the humanity of the Palestinian people.

Suddenly, on top of the insights described above, which were largely

focused on unearthing the contours of domestic oppression, there was a direct focus on the implications of state, academic, and corporate institutions in US imperial policy. This meant that the movement's basic moral insight simply could not be integrated into existing institutions as a new policy or training.

I know this is leaving a lot out. Any nutshell narrative of a decade plus is going to. But if you find this more or less plausible, then consider two points that I think provide some perspective on what it might mean to interrupt the plans currently being imposed upon us:

- *First,* what if we think of this cycle of movements as a process of collective education, a process of our digging beneath the illusions and unearthing the real history of the United States? Each of these movements demanded that we rethink who we are, developing a new framework to make sense of our own lives and actions. They were forces of memory that challenged the amnesia imposed upon us. This process is what might be meant by "progress" in the moral sense, in the sense of deepening popular education and changing common sense in a way that is more grounded in the reality of people's lived experience and the operations of power.
- *Second,* if we have indeed arrived in a situation in which a dictatorship is emerging, and if that dictatorship relies on the power of the police to enforce its will, then it is worth remembering that we all have some memory of how the police can be obstructed from doing so. In the early Summer of 2020, we caught a glimpse of the ability for everyday people to paralyze the apparatus by which their will is imposed on us.

To summarize: I'm inviting you to understand what is happening today as not simply something that powerful people are doing to us powerless people. Rather, it is a counter-revolution that we have earned. Because our struggles for justice have been so effective at disrupting their political game, the ruling class of billionaires and their neo-fascist gurus have been forced to fundamentally change the rules in order to set us all back. Its like we have been winning the game so far, to the point where we have arrived at the Big Boss: fascist dictatorship, cultural counter-revolution, and a new apparatus of surveillance and policing. The Monster Con. That is the only roadblock they have left to stop a transformation of common sense from becoming an actual transformation of reality.

The Problem in their Model

I want to focus on one major tension that has constantly reemerged within this process I've sketched, which I think is the structural source of many of the others. Overcoming this tension will, for many of us, require another shift in perspective. But I think we are at a moment where the only chance to rise to the task means one more level of collective education. Because doing so allows us to see the major weakness within the Monster Con's counter-revolution.

To see it, we have to acknowledge that in attacking what they call "wokeness," they are in practice attacking the policies that have attempted to adapt existing institutions to the moral progress in common sense that I've described above: DEI policies, federal funding for health, science and critical thinking, climate justice, etc.

Now this reveals two perspectives that were always in an uncomfortable relation across the process I described. Let's give them names:

- **The Institutionalist perspective:** From one perspective within the movements, the institutionalization of values is what progress looks like: demands that originate from moral outrage in the streets become codified in workplaces, policy, and law.
- **The Counter Power perspective:** From another perspective within the movements, these institutional forms of progress were always, at best, band-aids that didn't really solve the problems — and at worst, they were ways of actually stopping the energy of social movements and maintaining the status quo. The change in policy and diversity in 'seats at the table' were a way of preventing genuine transformation from happening. In words I vividly recall from a clergy member speaking in St. Louis after having been tear-gassed in Ferguson, "we have been demanding inclusion into power, but the point should have been to dismantle the institutions of power itself." The Counter Power perspective held that organizational forms to sustain moral progress — and the conditions of life itself — had to be built up at a distance from and in opposition to state-controlled institutions.

This tension has long existed within movements for social justice. Those working with existing institutions say the radicals in the streets aren't being realistic — to be 'realistic' means to adapt lofty demands to existing powerful institutions and set progressively better standards within them.

But those in the streets always had a compelling response. They would say that it is this piecemeal progress that is, in fact, unrealistic: if you rely on state-supported institutions for moral progress, then it can all be erased the moment the winds of state power shift and blow in a different direction. Moreover, if you've built up the power of those institutions in the process — giving them more legislation, more police, more surveillance — then these institutions will be in a position to do even greater damage when the winds shift, as they inevitably will when the power of the ruling class is genuinely threatened.

Maybe things could have gone another way. Maybe progress within institutions could have been continually pursued without this

CrimethInc. Ex-Workers
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Mar 12

We've prepared a poster promoting our film, Fell In Love With Fire, which documents the uprising that swept Chile from October 2019 to March 2020. The film shows how everyday people sustained six months of rebellion by creating extensive networks of self-determination and mutual aid.

You could use this poster to promote a screening in your community.

You can view the film here:

https://crimethinc.com/fellinlovewithfir

And you can print out the poster here:

https://crimethinc.com/posters/fell-in-love-with-fire

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Mar 11

— The Antisemitic Plan to Smear Palestine Solidarity as Antisemitic —

Trump's excuse for kidnapping Mahmoud Khalil is that Khalil engaged in "antisemitic" activity by protesting the genocide in Palestine.

In fact, Trump is using a playbook that was designed by the far-right Heritage Foundation to accuse *Jews* of "antisemitism."

We can't make this stuff up.

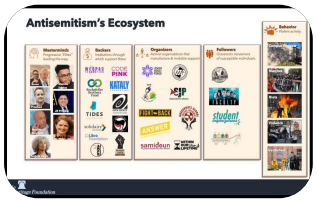
This is a slide from the Heritage Foundation presentation that argues for political deportations like the targeting of Khalil. It purports to describe "Antisemitism's Ecosystem."

Look closely: "Soros" and Jewish Voice for Peace are at the tops of the columns titled "Masterminds" and "Organizers."

By depicting empathy for Palestinians as participation in "a global Hamas Support Network," the Heritage Foundation aims to dehumanize Palestinians, terrorize all who do not support colonial genocide, and forcibly subordinate all Jewish people to the Christian Nationalist agenda.

This is a fascist program. It will not make Jewish people any safer than Palestinians. Like Palestinians, Jewish people are on the hit list of potential scapegoats—and what befalls one scapegoat will eventually befall another.

https://crimethinc.com/MahmoudKhal



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Mar 11

Then They Came for the Palestinians: How to Respond to the Kidnapping of Mahmoud Khalil

https://crimethinc.com/MahmoudKhal

We explore the strategy of the Trump administration in targeting a Palestinian activist and what is at stake in our response. To get some perspective, we present the experiences of anarchists whose comrade was similarly kidnapped for participating in the Occupy ICE movement in San Antonio, Texas in 2018.

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Mar 10

On March 8, Department of Homeland Security agents kidnapped Mahmoud Khalil, a Palestinian activist and grad student at Columbia University.

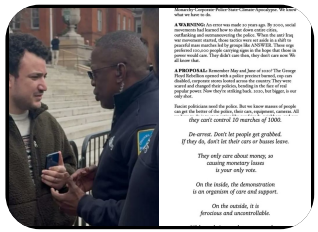
Khalil had permanent residency in the United States. Trump's fascist State Department arbitrarily revoked it. They are holding Khalil in Louisiana, over a thousand miles from home.

First they came for the Palestinians. Martin Niemöller's poem is happening right now.

Today, people will demonstrate in solidarity with Mahmoud Khalil in New York City.

Some demonstrators will be distributing this flier. You can print out copies here yourself:

https://crimethinc.com/zines/remembe
we-can-win



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Mar 9

Without the ever-escalating violence of amoral mercenaries, it would be impossible to preserve the disparities in wealth and power that make it possible for men like Elon Musk to buy up elections while millions go hungry.

Abolish billionaires. Abolish the police.

https://cwc.im/cops

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Mar 8

For March 8—International Women's Day—here is our draft program to resist patriarchy and transphobia.

https://crimethinc.com/GenderPoster2

First, abolish gender segregation. Ensure that people of all genders have access to the same opportunities, resources, social ties, and forms of agency.

Second, abolish fixed gender roles. Break free of the fixed roles and binaries that tie certain traits to

The Ex-Worker podcast: Become an Anarchist or Forever Hold Your Peace

https://crimethinc.com/exworker111

Neither courts nor laws will halt the descent into autocracy. Massive numbers of people will have to take it upon themselves to organize concrete acts of resistance, to take direct action on a horizontal and participatory basis—in other words, to become anarchists.

An audio rendering for your listening pleasure.

CrimethInc. Ex-Workers
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The Israeli military is bombing Gaza again, unilaterally breaching the ceasefire. Hundreds of people are already reported killed in Gaza.

They are not doing this because the Israeli government was not able to use diplomacy to achieve the goals that made them agree to the ceasefire.

They are doing this because, having achieved those intermediate goals, they are now in a position to resume the genocide, which is their chief goal.

Let no one make excuses for this attack. The Israeli military has already killed hundreds of Palestinian children for every Israeli child who was killed on October 7, 2023. They have already destroyed the schools and hospitals and rendered millions homeless.

This is genocide for the sake of colonial land theft, pure and simple.

Some background:

https://crimethinc.com/Gaza2024

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"They Can't Beat All of Us"

A Reportback from the Florida Abolitionist Gathering

https://crimethinc.com/FloridaAbolitio

From February 28 to March 2, hundreds of abolitionists and anarchists from across the country converged in Gainesville for the first Florida Abolitionist Gathering. Across a passionate weekend of workshops, films, food, debate, ritual, and protest, the contours of a robust regional resistance movement came into focus.

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Cop City Is Everywhere

Learning from the Movement to Defend the Forest

https://crimethinc.com/CopCity2025

The movement to stop Cop City and defend Weelaunee Forest was one of the most important social struggles of the Biden era. Its trajectory tells us a lot about the challenges we confront today under Donald Trump.

In the final chapter of our chronology, we trace the movement's concluding phase, beginning in 2023 and ending with Trump's arrival in power, and explore what we can learn from it.

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We honor the courage of the protesters arrested at Trump Tower in solidarity with Mahmoud Khalil.

Christian Nationalists aim to make themselves the arbiters of what counts as antisemitism in order to dehumanize Palestinians, discipline Jews who refuse to support genocide, and pave the way for fascism.

Trump made this clear enough yesterday, when he declared that a Jewish politician from the opposition had "become a Palestinian" by disagreeing with him.

Just as white nationalists justify racist violence by claiming to be "protecting women," Christian nationalists are attempting to justify crackdowns, deportations, and genocide. Don't fall for it.

https://crimethinc.com/MahmoudKhal

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@CrimethInc@todon.eu • Mar 12

Dictatorship by used-car salesmen.

Declining profit rates have driven capitalists to focus on market speculation. Both Elon Musk and Donald Trump have made their fortunes chiefly by hype.

Now they are perpetrating this scam at the highest level of political power, using the instruments of the state to promote their products. Elon Musk is transferring $100 million to Donald Trump in return for this car commercial.

But what goes up must come down. The more wealth and power they concentrate in their hands, the clearer it is to everyone else that the system that elevated them deserves to be destroyed.

https://crimethinc.com/busdriver

backlash. But I think we have to admit that it hasn't worked out that way for us. For better or worse, the street side of the argument has won, and we have to admit that progress can't be trusted in the hands of institutions that are subject to state authority: it must be built and defended outside those institutions. I hope to elaborate on this theme in future posts.

So, at long last, we can get to the weak point in the ongoing Butterfly Revolution. Its this: if the street side is right, then the institutional forms progress has taken are not actually the threat those in power think they are. Rather, those policies of institutionalized wokeness are, in fact, the means by which the demands for change in the streets have been diverted and tamed in order to maintain the overall power structure. In attacking the institutionalized forms of moral progress, the techno and christian fascists are throwing out one of their own most powerful weapons for suppressing social movements. In directing their attacks at these institutions, they are in fact attacking their own shield.

Those institutional forms of managing demands from below were developed over decades, and for good reason. Should we recognize that our freedom — and everything else — is at stake, and *should we choose freedom*, they simply cannot hold their project together with violence and bullying alone.

But this will take a massive expression of disruption from below. We've seen what that looks like: something like the early weeks of the George Floyd Rebellion, but without any illusions of piecemeal demands.

The Challenge

In conclusion: A small group of billionaires, scared that the American people were moving in a direction that might actually challenge their power, have granted themselves permission to dream very big about the kind of world they want. They freed themselves from the boundaries of the American Constitution in order to set a course for a new organization of the political world. They have given themselves the right to act boldly to impose this new order on us, and they are not going to stop unless we find a way to stop them.

The question I think we are presented with is this: will the process of education won by social movements be able to take the next step together? Can we drop the illusion that moral progress, the fight for historical justice, and the fight for the future of life on the planet, can be achieved through policies of existing institutions, and give ourselves the right to directly build the future we deserve? Can we drop the bullshit and oppose the apparatus of rule like our lives and the lives of those we love are at stake? Because they are.

One way or another, we are inside a process of fundamentally changing the world. If we don't want their plan to be the only one on offer, we have to similarly give ourselves the right to dream big, to act boldly, and make clear that its our vision against theirs.

Support and subscribe to *The New Times* here.

Photo by ActionVance on Unsplash

How the Koreatown Popular Assembly Organized Neighborhood Power to Confront ICE

March 24, 2025

Members of the Black Rose Anarchist Federation speak with organizers of the Koreatown Popular Assembly (KPA), who worked to stop deportations and ICE raids during the first Trump administration.

This interview is a reflection on the successes and missteps of the Koreatown Popular Assembly (KPA), an attempt at neighborhood based organizing that existed from 2016-2022 and aimed to confront the first Trump administration's deportation policies. With Trump now back in power, many are once again looking for models to defend themselves and their communities from an even more rabidly anti-immigrant agenda.

This article is the companion to a forthcoming "how-to-organize a popular assembly" guide based on lessons from KPA and other neighborhood organizing efforts that members of Black Rose/Rosa Negra have been embedded in over the years. Check back for that soon.

Two months into Donald Trump's second presidential term, and so far, his administration has kept its campaign promises to terrorize immigrants, undocumented or otherwise. Vicious lies about invasive criminality plague press conferences and executive orders. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) seeks new collaborations with other state agencies to recruit personnel and execute mass deportations. Border Czar Tom Homan hints at caging kids once again.

As during Trump's first term, communities across the country have refused to cower in fear. Residents ring tiplines around the clock to report impending ICE activity while community organizers sponsor trainings to defend against raids. Students, neighbors, and coworkers plaster their schools, towns, and workplaces with Red Cards and other Know-Your-Rights literature.

From 2016 to 2022, Koreatown Popular Assembly (KPA), a Los Angeles-based formation in an immigrant-rich multiethnic neighborhood, did all this and more. Most importantly, KPA's members waited for no one to save them; they proactively organized collective resistance to ICE and Trump's nativist agenda from the ground up alongside other everyday people.

Conducted and edited by Juan Verala Luz, this interview with Morgan, one of the project's lead organizers, and Elizabeth Chi, who joined KPA when she moved to LA in late 2018, explores how KPA started, what it did, and the context for its success and later dissolution.

Amidst a popular upsurge, dedicated revolutionaries patiently encouraged one neighborhood to deliberately identify practical strategies to confront the state terror it faced, together. Despite skepticism towards making decisions and acting collectively, gentle onramps, multilingual support, and efforts to accommodate diverse work schedules translated an inclusive vision of direct democracy into a participatory experiment. Ultimately, familiar organizing difficulties—shifting political winds that temper interest, committed leaders stepping back, and struggles with recruitment—undid KPA.

However, the experience paints a picture rich with lessons for (re)building rooted organs of direct democracy and mass social movements for immigrant liberation, both of which can lay the groundwork for a popular power that can challenge the state and capital.

Early Days of KPA

BRRN: Let's set the stage for KPA. What was the social movement and broader political landscape like in the neighborhood, the city more generally, and even the country?

M: In contrast to today, there was just an explosion of people trying to figure out what we can do and there were a lot of people coming into the streets. If you called a meeting at that time, you'd get floods of people who just wanted to do something. There was also a huge amount of fear, particularly in immigrant communities. There were a lot of spontaneous marches. In Koreatown, a lot of the public schools that we were closely connected to, the teachers and students had a walkout on the day of the inauguration, I think.

There were a few scattered walkouts at other schools and places. There was sometime around that *A Day Without Immigrants* that was very poorly planned and communicated, but still going down Pico Boulevard I remember thinking, "Oh, there are actually a whole bunch of places that shut down because of this random call-out." That was kind of the vibe in response to the election, and all that energy had no where to go. People wanted to do something, but it wasn't clear what.

BRRN: What led to your decision to organize a popular assembly? Why not some other sort of organizational form or structure?

M: Basically, there was a citywide assembly called to talk about Los Angeles's response to Trump. ... After that, the meeting organizers said, "Okay, let's go and form breakout groups and then go meet up and form a group for your neighborhood." Koreatown was one of the breakout groups from that citywide meeting. Then I became involved, I think, in one of the first meetings of what had been a breakout group from that citywide meeting.

I believe the name "popular assembly" was there from the beginning, but almost nobody knew what a popular assembly was. I think it was NDLON, the *National Day Labor Organizing Network*, that gave the name popular assembly to, first, the citywide meeting and then the breakout groups that then became these neighborhood groups. My memory is that they were relying on an experience from Arizona where... there was a group they organized... that organized the immigrant community to form popular assemblies as a community defense tactic and hoped to implement something similar in Los Angeles. That wasn't really communicated very well to most people. There was this term, "popular assembly," and then this big meeting in the breakout groups, and there was not really any direction.

When [I] and a couple other people saw the name, "popular assembly," we got a little excited because obviously we have some political ideas about that and about the importance of neighborhood-based democratic decision making. So that neighborhood group then started meeting, and basically me, Sarah, who was a member of a Trotskyist organization and a public-school teacher in Koreatown, and David, who was a staffer for NDLON who was living in the area, were the main people who then said, "Let's actually make this a popular assembly."

Most of the other people who came to those initial meetings were more of the opinion of "Let's have a picnic. Let's just get connected and get to know each other." They thought of it as a kind of ambiguous 'community building' effort. There was no vision for structure, or strategy, or specific goals. So, we proposed instead of just this little breakout group, let's have an open assembly for the neighborhood and let's make it a decision-making space.

There was actually a lot of debate about that. A lot of people were against making a decision-making space ... [In the notes] there's a proposal from someone where the outcome was we talk about projects we can plug into and how we're going to stay connected. So, there's actually nothing concrete; no decisions are made. I had been to plenty of "assemblies" like that before; people come, they share information, and then they leave and there are probably going to be more meetings scheduled with no clear purpose until people get bored of meetings and stop showing up. We actually had to really debate, propose, and put forward...[an] emphasis on it being open and a decision-making space [to] try to actually get something concrete coming out of this so people can feel like we're actually doing a thing together.

BRRN: Do you remember the sorts of opposition and arguments that were raised against making KPA a decision-making body?

M: I remember a lot of the opposition was not so much ideological. I think maybe it was just not what people are used to.

One position may have been that the assembly should then fractalize into smaller and smaller groups. [After] we had a Koreatown General Assembly or popular assembly, [some people argued that] then we split up into breakout groups [by geography]. [People] in Northwest Koreatown [and] Northeast Koreatown [would go]

@CrimethInc@todon.eu • Mar 24

Clashes between police and protesters are picking up in Turkey following the autocrat Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's decision to have politicians from the opposition arrested.

For background, you can read about the last mass uprising in Turkey—the Gezi Park uprising of 2013—here:

https://crimethinc.com/Gezi2013

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Mar 21

On March 20, anarchists and other protesters held simultaneous demonstrations in at least 19 cities in Indonesia in response to the Indonesian Parliament enacting the revised Indonesian National Armed Forces Bill (UU TNI), which paves the way for a return to the authoritarianism of the military dictatorship under Suharto. The protesters confronted extreme police repression in the streets.

These events are part of the same wave of authoritarianism that is sweeping the world. All of our struggles are interlinked.

Our Indonesian comrades are calling on us to engage in solidarity actions, including demonstrating at embassies.

In their words:

We rise, not in silence, but in raging fire.
A wildfire of defiance, fueled by the love of freedom,
and the unyielding spirit of those who refuse to kneel.

This is not just a fight for Indonesia, but a battle cry for every soul who dares to dream
of a world unchained, unbowed, unbroken.

We reject the chains of militarism, the cold steel of authoritarianism, and the suffocating grip of neo-fascism.

We are the voices of the oppressed, the hands that build barricades, the hearts that beat for anarchy—the chaos, and the beautiful disorder of liberation.

For more background on the context:
http://crimethinc.com/indonesia2024

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Mar 21

Survival

A work of speculative fiction about anarchists enduring mass raids and the technological innovations via which they survive.

https://crimethinc.com/SurvivalStory

In November 1919, United States President Woodrow Wilson launched mass raids against the entire anarchist movement in the United States. Police simultaneously arrested thousands of anarchists in many different parts of the country, shutting down their newspapers, organizations, and meeting halls.

If similar raids were to take place today, they would occur in a technological landscape involving mass surveillance and targeted electronic attacks. Those who survive would also have to adopt different tools.

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Mar 20

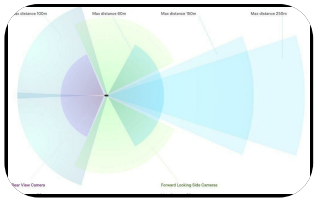
Every Tesla is a surveillance device.

This is worth knowing regardless of whether you plan to engage in protest activity.

This chart shows the locations and ranges of the cameras, presuming they have an unobstructed view.

Fashion tips for preserving your privacy around Teslas:

https://crimethinc.com/fashiontips



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Mar 19

To prepare for the next election, Turkish autocrat Recep Tayyip Erdoğan sent police to arrest his chief political rival and 100 other political adversaries.

This is the model Trump is importing to the United States.

For background on the roots of Turkish fascism:

https://crimethinc.com/TurkishFascisr

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Mar 18

On this day in 1871, French troops sided with the people that they were sent to repress against the generals and the oligarchs who sought to dominate them. This set off a revolutionary chain reaction that changed the course of history.

Such things do happen.

https://crimethinc.com/arch18

CrimethInc. Ex-Workers
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With Arrest of Midwife, Texas Escalates Chilling Reproductive Rights Crackdown
The near-total abortion ban in Texas has already been deadly. A criminalizing crackdown will make mortality rates worse.

It's Going Down
@igd_news@kolektiva.social
• Mar 24

Mark your calendars! Upcoming bookfair in the PNW. More info: https://hotvbookfair.noblogs.org/

It's Going Down
@igd_news@kolektiva.social
• Mar 23

"My husband was taken away from me in the middle of the night. It was one of the most terrifying times of my life. I don't think I've ever experienced anything scarier than that."

In his first public remarks, Khalil called himself a "political prisoner" and warned that other "visa-holders, green-card carriers, and citizens alike will all be targeted for their political beliefs."

https://www.cbsnews.com/news/mahmoud-khalil-wife-noor-abdalla-on-his-arrest-by-ice-agents/?utm_source=firefox-newtab-en-us

Mahmoud Khalil's wife, Noor Abdalla, says his arrest by ICE agents was "one of the most terrifying" moments of her life

Noor Abdalla shares a firsthand account of her husband Mahmoud Khalil's detainment on "CBS Sunday Morning" March 23.

It's Going Down
@igd_news@kolektiva.social
• Mar 20

Neoliberalism failed. What comes next is even worse.

Jamie Merchant speaks on @thebeautifulidea about Trump and the tech-right and what autonomous anti-capitalist forces can do to push back.

https://itsgoingdown.org/trump-the-tech-right-and-the-post-neoliberal-order/

Trump, the Tech-Right, and the Post-Neoliberal Order
In this episode of The Beautiful Idea, we present an interview with author Jamie Merchant, author of Engame: Economic Nationalism and Global...

It's Going Down
@igd_news@kolektiva.social
• Mar 20

"Tesla protesters are planning their "biggest day of action" yet, aiming for 500 demonstrations at Tesla showrooms across the world on March 29th..."

https://www.theverge.com/news/633000/tesla-takedown-protesters-planning-biggest-day-of-action

'Tesla Takedown' protesters planning 'biggest day of action'
500 events, 277 showrooms, March 29th

It's Going Down
@igd_news@kolektiva.social
• Mar 20

"My name is Mahmoud Khalil and I am a political prisoner. I am writing to you from a detention facility in Louisiana where I wake to cold mornings and spend long days bearing witness to the quiet injustices underway against a great many people precluded from the protections of the law.

Who has the right to have rights? It is certainly not the humans crowded into the cells here. It isn't theSenegalese man I met who has been deprived of his liberty for a year, his legal situation in limbo and his family an ocean away. It isn't the 21-year-old detainee I met, who stepped foot in this country at age nine, only to be deported without so much as a hearing.

Justice escapes the contours of this nation's immigration facilities."

https://truthout.org/articles/i-am-a-political-prisoner-writes-mahmoud-khalil-from-ice-jail/

"I Am a Political Prisoner," Writes Mahmoud Khalil From ICE Jail
In the weeks ahead, students, advocates and elected officials must unite to defend the right to protest for Palestine.

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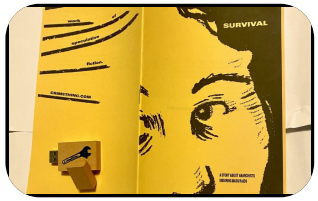
Mar 25

We've prepared a zine version of Survival, our story about anarchists enduring mass raids.

This work of speculative fiction explores what sort of technological innovations might emerge in such circumstances.

https://crimethinc.com/zines/survival

Please print these out and distribute them in your community!



CrimethInc. Ex-Workers

set up separate committee meetings. I don't think that's really a debate on principles, so much of a debate on practicality and the purpose of repeated meetings. I think we did make a gesture [to that with] breakout groups by what part of Koreatown where we were in, but then we kept everyone coming back to one whole Koreatown organizing committee. Then we actually broadened it because there was no other group like this in LA. We basically made it "greater" Koreatown.

I think partly there was maybe a resistance to when you make a decision it means also saying no to things. I think some people want to have a space where people can just bring in their ideas and just say yes to everything and not have to choose and prioritize or develop a real strategy.

There was also a sense of people wanting to have breakout groups by...a tactic or affinity. For example, "we're gonna break out for people who want to focus on queer issues, we're gonna have a breakout for people who want to focus on immigrant issues" ... We argued against that because we all ended up doing immigrant-based stuff, whether we were immigrants or not. Doing those kinds of breakout issues 1) tends to multiply the number of things you're trying to do rather than building enough capacity to get enough critical mass behind one effort to make it sustainable and successful and 2) it defeats the purpose of having a neighborhood-based group because you're not making decisions in the neighborhood at that point.

Organizing in and Through KPA

BRRN: Now let's learn a little bit more about what KPA did. What were its major objectives and how did it land on them?

M: [At] the big General Assembly there were three decisions made: that we focus on building an all-volunteer rapid response network; creating sanctuary schools that were protecting against ICE raids; and educating the neighborhood about their rights.

We did a lot of work around sanctuary schools but there actually was not as much that needed to be done because ICE was not actually going into schools at that point. But we were organizing in the main public school in K-Town.

We very quickly became super focused on just providing a rapid response network. That took up so much time and effort because doing that as a volunteer project requires a whole team of people doing logistics and doing trainings. Then a whole separate group of people has 24-hour dispatchers answering phone calls at any time of the day. And then a whole team of 200-plus first responders who are trained and ready to [act]. It is a lot of work, so we very quickly became consumed by keeping those structures running.

Our objective asa rapid response network was to block ICE raids. A lot of the nonprofit rapid response networks, their only purpose is for people to call, and they give callers resources on how they can maybe access legal representation or tell you your rights—which, you know, how much are those worth? Our goal was to actually intervene as much as possible, and we didn't really succeed in that as much as we might have. It's very hard to actually block ICE raids. I followed the news and reports of this very closely when we were organizing because I was trying to figure out how we could do it better. During the first Trump administration, it happened a couple of times around the whole of the US.

We did block an ICE truck once, but that was when we had a protest actually at the ICE building.

EC: I feel like we were actually able to figure out ICE's plans a bit in the neighborhood. I remember we were constantly canvassing the Ralph's parking lot because there were reports of a staging ground there. We reached out to local businesses and just had people almost patrolling there and had sent out first responders there several times. We were able to report when ICE started using unmarked vehicles in the neighborhood or when there were patterns and shifts in their behavior.

Resolute Revolutionaries, Inclusive Structures Cultivate KPA

BRRN: In terms of organizing outcomes like campaign wins, organizer development, consistency of a project, KPA seems to have been one of, if not the most, successful experiments in popular assemblies during the first Trump administration. What contributed to it?

M: I agree that probably it was one of the most successful. That doesn't mean that we actually had lots of big wins, though.

EC: Probably what contributed most to its success was a few very, very dedicated individuals, one of them being Morgan, but also some others that really went above and beyond and put in a ton of time and thought and heart into it.

M : There were a number of breakout groups aiming to become 'popular assemblies' from that first citywide General Assembly. KPA is the only one where there were basically revolutionaries who had a vision of neighborhood organizing and democracy who proposed "Let's actually make this into an assembly." Every single other 'popular assembly' from that initial citywide meeting died off very quickly. I think there were some similar efforts in other cities that died also either [because] they just didn't take on a focus or they didn't open themselves up as a neighborhood space and so they also didn't really get on their feet. There may have been a couple of exceptions in, like, Portland.

EC: I think there was a lot of dedication to making [KPA] not

just a typical organizing space [and] to making it as inclusive as possible, not just [for] academics or typical organizers but [for] everyday people.

There was the language justice component. By the time I was there, there was a designated interpreter with every meeting, notes were taken in both English and Spanish, and all statements were made in English and Spanish. But when did that get implemented?

M: I think from the beginning. From the beginning, all the notes are in English, but I see from who's there [in the notes] that there are some people I remember being monolingual Spanish speakers. I also see that someone who was there was also a member of a group, *Antena Los Ángeles*, that provided movement interpretation services. I'm pretty sure the group was bilingual from the beginning, but I don't remember exactly how we logistically did that in those very, very first meetings. The first General Assembly was trilingual, because it was in Korean as well, but we never had monolingual Korean speakers participate in the ongoing meetings.

EC: There was also an attempt to not just have meetings be centered around a nine-to-five schedule. They typically were, unfortunately, but there was at least a recognition that doesn't necessarily coincide with the schedules of non-nine-to-five office workers. There would be some meetings and events that [were] at different times. I think just a lot of general statements of intention to that effect, right? I also think we could have done a better job, but the intent was there.

EC: The geography I think helps too: Koreatown's not huge, so it just made it easier to meet and to keep the project rooted in the identity of the neighborhood.

M: [It's] the only neighborhood in Los Angeles that actually feels like you're in a city ... Being a neighborhood group, we were able to do more social events than we would have if we were an LA-based group where we're all two hours away from each other.

EC: I think there was a lot of trust, too, within most people of the organization. We had solid community guidelines and not just in a "let's just do them" kind of way, but pretty strong commitment to them. I think it connects to the first thing, too, of valuing different perspectives and everyone's experience is as valuable as the next person's. By the time I got there, I think everyone had already built in relationships.

M: One part is that making a local practical group or project means it's going to be less focused on some of the various left groups and activist personalities.

We didn't really have to deal with a lot of that [in KPA]. We didn't have to deal with people who were coming to try and stroke their own ego or get credit for something.

I also think that doing a lot of work together where you could see that [you were] having an impact and you knew what you were doing and what your purpose was also kept people focused and grounded. Being more of a neighborhood-based group kept things grounded [by] having a lot of existing connections prior to KPA, whether it's members' former high school students or co-workers. A lot of people worked together and knew each other from different workplaces or groups.

COVID Complications, Biden in Office Stall KPA

BRRN: KPA slowly wound down its activity before formally closing in 2022. Can you share what led to its slow decline and eventual end?

EC: I think it was core members leaving, and not because of not liking the work, but [because of] life: people moving, people getting promoted, getting married, having kids. I went to law school [outside of LA], Morgan through his work had to move [out of LA], too, and there were other members who had to leave for various reasons.

M : We were [meeting] online [because] the pandemic scattered a number of us. At that point a number of us were out of LA. COVID meant we were meeting on Zoom and it was so much harder to bring people in and recruit people.

EC: At another level, all of these things ultimately led to its demise because of underlying issues around recruitment and retention. You had to have a lot of knowledge around how the group worked in order to not be bored at meetings or to not feel intimidated. And as much as I think we tried to have intros each time about the background and stuff, sometimes those meetings could get long, and so people skip them sometimes and forget to explain some things. It's a small group, we were doing a lot, and there was not someone who's actively always doing mass recruitment; it was just people connecting with people they already knew.

Even if there were recruitment efforts, to follow up with people to get them to really join was hard. On top of the meetings, there was actual first response stuff, too: taking shifts as dispatchers, planning the trainings, and responding to calls. Also, a lot of stuff started coming through Instagram instead of the call line. So, I think, in general, it was too much work for too few people and I think that leads to burnout. It also just makes it harder for new people to join because it seems so intimidating.

M: We consistently got recruitment and activity when there were things in the news around immigration-related stuff. During the Trump administration, there consistently would be like, oh, DACA is going to be repealed, for example, and children being separated at the border. We consistently [would] get pulses of activity. More people would come to our events or trainings and through the trainings, people would get involved with the planning committee, we build capacity, etc.

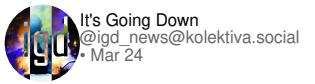
Under Biden, that stopped happening. It was much harder to recruit people after Biden was elected [even though] Biden was deporting just as many people as Trump did in his first term. But it

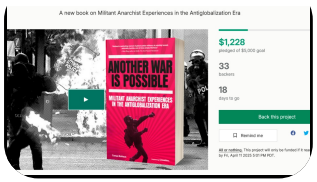
the U.S.-backed genocide in Gaza. Unlike the Trump administration and DOGE, none of these initiatives represented a systemic shift or targeted the administrative state—they mostly targeted radicals, foreigners, poor people, and other subversives.

Similarly, while tech capitalists' collective embrace of Trump is a new and dangerous development, Democrats helped build their influence in Washington. The shift to unmanned weapons systems (which has helped tech companies win more military contracts) has its roots in the Obama administration, which vastly expanded the use of drones to carry out assassinations, at a cost of hundreds of civilian lives. And given the Obama administration's massive construction of surveillance infrastructure (including spy satellites, supercomputers, listening posts, fiber-optic cables, etc.), it's no surprise that web, telecommunications, software, and other computer-related companies favored Obama over Republicans. This finding comes from a study of business contributions in the 2012 presidential race, which concluded that "national Democratic leaders are politically allied with many of the industries closely linked with the new National Surveillance State."

All this doesn't mean we should treat all examples of capitalist political influence as the same, or ignore the immediate, overriding threat the Trump administration presents to all of us. Rather, it underscores the pressing need to build a broad-based resistance movement independent of the Democratic Party, where radical and anti-capitalist voices are not silenced.

Photo by Frecia Chirinos on Unsplash





It's Going Down
@igd_news@kolektiva.social
• Mar 24

"The Trump administration has ramped up efforts to target free speech on college campuses and one doctoral student at Cornell University who was involved in pro-Palestinian protests on campus now finds himself targeted for deportation once again."

https://truthout.org/video/pro-palestinian-cornell-student-momodou-taal-is-targeted-again-for-deportation/

Pro-Palestinian Cornell Student Momodou Taal Is Targeted Again for Deportation
This is what happens when universities don't stand by their students: Cornell has placed a target on my back, Taal said.

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• Mar 24

This gathering in #Montreal looks amazing! Check out @rafales here on Mastodon.

"Two days of theoretical and practical training in the form of panels and workshops with speakers, authors and activists from Montreal and elsewhere on anarchism, struggles against domination, revolutionary and anti-authoritarian issues and collective autonomy.

RAFALES is totally free and open to all. No need to register! To help defray the many costs of the training camp, we'll be encouraging voluntary contributions. There will also be books, zines and militant material for sale or available for free!"

More info: https://ora-rao.org/rafales-eng/

It's Going Down
@igd_news@kolektiva.social
• Mar 24

"This interview is a reflection on the successes and missteps of the Koreatown Popular Assembly (KPA), an attempt at neighborhood based organizing that existed from 2016-2022 and aimed to confront the first Trump administration's deportation policies. With Trump now back in power, many are once again looking for models to defend themselves and their communities from an even more rabidly anti-immigrant agenda."

https://itsgoingdown.org/how-the-koreatown-popular-assembly-organized-neighborhood-power-to-confront-ice/

How the Koreatown Popular Assembly Organized Neighborhood Power to Confront ICE
Members of the Black Rose Anarchist Federation speak with organizers of the Koreatown Popular Assembly (KPA), who worked to stop deportation...

It's Going Down
@igd_news@kolektiva.social
• Mar 24

"For several months, state investigators in Texas staked out clinics, interviewed witnesses and dove through dumpsters to look for evidence. Why, you may ask, did the government pour time and money into an extensive surveillance operation based on an anonymous tip? To arrest a midwife for providing reproductive health care."

https://truthout.org/articles/with-arrest-of-midwife-texas-escalates-chilling-reproductive-rights-crackdown/

Chinese AI technology.

3. Both crypto and AI are burning up the earth. The electricity demands of both AI and crypto are enormous. They need a completely deregulated energy industry and rapid shift away from any climate policy. Even the mention of climate change is a threat to their fortunes.

4. China has caught up faster than they expected in all realms of tech. They need an ultra-protectionist/nationalist regime to keep Chinese technology at bay.

Another factor is that newish tech firms such as Anduril Industries and Palantir Technologies (both bankrolled by Peter Thiel) as well as Musk's SpaceX are increasingly challenging traditional military manufacturers such as Lockheed Martin, Boeing, and General Dynamics for Pentagon and Homeland Security contracts. Longtime military policy analyst Michael Klare argues that "a new MIC [military-industrial complex] is being born, one that potentially will have very different goals and profit-takers than the existing one." Klare sees a growing divide "between costly manned weapons made by traditional defense contractors and more affordable unmanned systems made by the likes of Anduril, General Atomics, and AeroVironment," with political consequences for the Trump coalition: "Most Republican lawmakers, who generally rely on contributions from the old MIC companies to finance their campaigns, are bound to support the major prime contractors in such a rivalry. But two of Trump's key advisers, J.D. Vance and Elon Musk, could push him in the opposite direction."

Points of Weakness

Musk's DOGE is at the cutting edge of Trump's drive to expand presidential authority and shred the principle of checks and balances that has been a cornerstone of the U.S. government since its founding. The initiative aims to both drastically shrink the administrative state and remake it as the president's political tool, but it also places extensive core state functions under the control of an essentially private body with the capacity to engage in outright plunder and virtually no accountability to anyone except—at most—Trump himself. The regime's authoritarian power drive has already begun to have devastating effects on people's livelihoods, health care, social services, and beyond. Whether the courts capitulate to this assault or try to block it, with uncertain outcome, some portion of its impact on the state is likely to be irreversible.

At the same time, DOGE's operations help us identify several potential points of weakness within the Trump regime. Trump and Musk may have their falling out, with the result either that Musk gets fired or there's a very messy struggle for power. DOGE may overreach through recklessness, incompetence, and hubris, alienating supporters and provoking stronger push-back from the courts, Democrats, Republicans, or other sections of the regime itself. Thus recently we've seen Republican congress members criticizing DOGE and Trump-appointed heads of key agencies countermanding instructions from the DOGE-controlled Office of Personnel Management. Tech capitalists' new status as Trump favorites may foster greater cohesiveness within the regime on economic policy and geostrategy, but it could also alienate other powerful sections of the business community, whether around competition for contracts as Michael Klare outlined or around other issues.

Neo-reactionary elitism may also collide with MAGA populism, especially as the real world impact of dismantling federal agencies and withholding funding is increasingly felt. Even before the inauguration, Musk clashed publicly with MAGA stalwarts Steve Bannon and Laura Loomer over the H-1B visa program. And while some antifascists assume that tech capitalists will win any such fight, I'm not so sure. There are sections of the MAGA movement, first and foremost the vast New Apostolic Reformation network, whose ideological commitment runs deeper than loyalty to Trump, and who have extensive financial and media resources wholly independent of Silicon Valley.

I don't have specific strategic conclusions to draw from all this yet, but any fault lines within the Trump coalition deserve close attention. They bely the image of unity and omnipotence that the regime wants to project, and they may create opportunities we can exploit.

Yet in looking at ways to combat the Trump regime, rallying to the Democratic Party would be a serious mistake. As I wrote recently:

> Since the late 1970s, Democrats have been complicit with Republicans in making neoliberalism the dominant form of capitalist rule, expanding the repressive state apparatus, and strengthening military interventionism—policies that in some ways laid the groundwork for Trumpism and in others fueled a right-wing populist backlash from which Trump has benefited.

While the Republican Party's leadership in expanding state repression (such as passing the Patriot Act and authorizing the use of torture) has received more attention, the Democrats, too, have played an active role—from Bill Clinton's Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act (which weakened defendants' rights and restrictions on wiretapping) to the Biden administration's dangerous use of "seditious conspiracy" charges against far rightists (a tactic that inevitably fuels repression against the left). In between, Barack Obama oversaw the $100 billion construction of "the most powerful surveillance state the world has ever seen," and, as a gift to President-elect Donald Trump just days before leaving office, Obama signed an executive order making it "easier for the nation's intelligence agencies to share unfiltered [surveillance] information about innocent people." On a state and local level, Democrats have actively promoted measures to suppress Palestine solidarity protests against

wasn't nearly as flashy in a way. It was much more of a bureaucratic process. So, there wasn't the same attention on the issue.

Dream Big, Start Small, Prepare for the Long Haul

BRRN: There's lots of interest and excitement about popular and neighborhood assemblies now, as Trump has returned to office. Having gone through this experience, what advice and lessons would you want to share with organizers interested in experimenting with this kind of neighborhood structure in their backyards?

M: Don't be grandiose. If you go out and just declare "I'm going to have a neighborhood assembly," it's probably not going to happen. I think if KPA had been called at any other moment, it would not have happened in the way it did. I think if we had tried to do it the same way after Trump's election in 2024, it would not have happened. [Trump's first election in 2016] was a unique moment when we could just flyer the streets and random strangers who had never come to an organizing meeting before would show up, all speaking different languages. Today it would take much more ground work.

You need to have built a lot of connections with people before you ever call a first assembly. If there are a bunch of churches or other social institutions on board and they can vouch and turn people out, that's something. ... There were people who had a lot of connections in the neighborhood, but [KPA] was put together without much background, without much organizing on the ground initially, again because of the moment we were in. We built connections to various churches later. If you have that kind of history and those kinds of connections, then you can build something like KPA. Otherwise, I think it's quite hard in our present political context and in a context where people aren't very used to neighborhood assemblies. If you're going to do it, you have to start small and be prepared to put in years of work.

The other key lesson is that, if you reach a place where you have the capacity to actually call an assembly, you have to have a structure and decision making process in mind as you begin. Really, you have to make sure your spaces are democratic, open decision-making spaces and have a clear idea of what you're going to do with that. I think that moment was also special [when] the first assembly was in February 2017, right around the inauguration, because the problems and the answers were both quite clear to people. The problem in the neighborhood was immigration raids and the solution was to stop them, to keep them out. Our task was to develop a strategy and set of tactics for how to actually do that.

In times when it's more diffuse, when there's a whole bunch of competing issues and nobody is quite clear on what to do about it, it's a lot harder and it'll take a lot more time. But it's also, I think, the responsibility of revolutionaries to think through those and propose the key issues and the key solutions, which is what these spaces are for, right? Then from there you come to a concrete project. I think a neighborhood assembly, like any other meeting, is kind of pointless to most people unless it's clear: *this is what we're doing, this is how, and this is what the purpose is.*

If you're interested in learning more about the Koreatown Popular Assembly, we recommend watching *A Year in Popular Power #2: Stopping ICE Raids with Koreatown Popular Assembly* and reading *Koreatown Popular Assembly: Shutting Down ICE, Building Popular Power*.

International Call for Anarchist and Anti-Carceral Poets

March 21, 2025

Call out to participate in an international anarchist and anti-carceral poetry collection in solidarity with anarchist prisoners.

Individuals and collectives from different regions of the Global South/ Abya Yala, gathered together in different projects in the Chilean region-*Guitarras Libertarias* and the *Federación Cultural Antiautoritaria*—have organized countercultural activities and actions to disseminate information on the situation of imprisoned anarchists in Chile. Activities like *Guitarras Libertarias* and *Jornadas de Agitación Kontra Todas Las Jualas* are different solidarity initiatives that have sought to accompany prisoners engaged in the social/antisocial war seeking to accelerate their liberation.

On this occasion, as *Revista Rebeldias Liricas* of the journal *El Sol Acrata* and *Guitarras Libertarias,* we invite folks to participate in an anarchist poetry collection, "Poetry against prisons." We seek to gather anti-carceral and internationalist verses and ideas against all cages and borders of business totalitarianism.

The idea is to publish a compilation of poetry that can be shared in different anti-carceral activities in different territories, to make visible solidarity with prisoners engaged in the social/antisocial war. At the same time, the collection of poetry seeks to cultivate a space of expression, of feelings and thoughts, of compañerxs organizing against prisons from different territories, and to radicalize those expressions, feelings and thoughts.

We invite everyone to collaborate in the production of this material, and once it is published, to print it in different territories, to distribute it either for a standardized price or for a solidarity contribution defined by those who join in on the campaign in each region.

With this initiative we hope to contribute economically to organizations of families and friends of prisoners from the social/anti-social war in the most direct way possible. We want this poetry collection to contribute to the potency of the anti-carceral and antiauthoritarian struggle in different regions of the world fighting against business totalitarianism.

We have an enemy in common. Let's strengthen our bonds of solidarity with poetry against prisons.

You can send your proposals to the email address: ppoesia43@gmail.com

Art work done by: @mirai.grafika

Antisemitism Hurts

March 20, 2025

Anarchist author and organizer Cindy Milstein writes on antisemitism. This was originally published in the anthology, *There Is Nothing So Whole as a Broken Heart: Mending the World as Jewish Anarchists*. Check out a zine version of this text, here.

by Cindy Milstein

> Hurt: still. We are moved because it hurts still.
>
> We are not over it; it is not over.
>
> —Sara Ahmed, "Feminist Hurts / Feminism Hurts"

One pond, two ramshackle farmhouses, ten acres, and some eighty anarchists, miles from anywhere. Tucked away on the hill where they'd pitched their tents, hoisting up red and black flags, they felt miles away, too, from the cares of the world. They were transfixed by fireflies in the tall summer weeds and marveled at all the stars in the clear deep sky. They felt the flames within themselves reignite again as they circled around a campfire, ashes and embers, banter and laughter, floating into the night, reverberating throughout the valley below.

Sometimes, during those ephemeral moments that you want to last forever, it feels like "there is a crack," as Leonard Cohen wrote, "a crack in everything (there is a crack in everything) / That's how the light gets in." You look around at all the faces, flushed with a radiance that only comes from creating something magical together. You see old friends, new comrades, people who've inspired you, or who you've learned from and been challenged by, helping you grow strong like the vegetables thriving in the garden on this land.

"Jews control the world."

He'd made a beeline for you. His nose is several inches from yours. You can smell that he's drunk. You think he must be joking.

"All Jews," he emphasizes, leaning in even closer. "All Jews!"

You can now almost feel the hairs in his nostrils. You can smell that he's adamant. He spews out a monologue that could have been lifted from The Protocols of the Elders of Zion, barely skipping a beat to hear your objections, until out of the corner of your eye you can see four or five other anarchist Jews crowding around him. "Us too?" "Yes, all Jews! You all control t h e world!" There's suddenly a cacophony of loud voices, overlapping. He stays nose to nose with you, the only Jewish co-organizer of this weekend bringing "prominent" anarchists from across the continent to one place, as if that in itself is confirmation of your global domination. You remember little of what you said, though at one point recall gesticulating wildly, likely affirming his notion of "the Jew," as you asked him, "If all of that is true, if we have that much power, why wouldn't all of us anti-Zionist Jews here free the Palestinian people?" He remains unmoved.

Later, under an expansive night sky, some friends made excuses for him, saying "he drank too much." Others at this do-it-ourselves theory conference preferred to abstractly debate the meaning of the terms "Semite" and "antisemite." Most simply ignored the whole incident, as if it didn't even register.

Only the anarchists who were also Jews came to your aid.

***

Your father just died, and your mother will follow him soon. You've been caring for them both and now need to dismantle the five-bedroom home they lived in for some four decades. Neither of them could throw anything away, and everyone in your family was fond of dragging free stuff into the house. It's a huge task, or mess, depending on your perspective.

After a few days of packing up a box of mementos for yourself and similar boxes for your three bio siblings, your anarchist ingenuity takes over. You turn the whole space, from basement through first and second floors up to the attic, into a make-an-offer yard sale, from zero dollars up, but soon becoming a "really really free market."

For a week, you let people dig through the home you grew up in while you hang out in the living room. Folks bring you an individual item or create a pile of things. They feel awkward about naming a price, and you suggest "free." All you see are memories via association with objects you'd forgotten about. Then, touchingly, you get to hear folks explain the ways they're going to give their finds a good, new home.

You are, in essence, sitting shiva, though you only realize that in hindsight.

During those seven days, you're surrounded by a constant community. Each person asks why you're emptying out the house alone and giving everything away. They pepper you with questions—this is the chatty Midwest after all—and really listen. They come back another day to help with cleaning, or bring and share food. Almost everyone has hard-luck tales—this is the economically devastated Midwest after all—and so they tell you their stories of loss. You end up holding space for others' grief stories along with your own, as you gift the entirety of life in this home

government as a conquered enemy now controlled by an outside force."

In this "revolution," Yarvin proposed:

> Trump himself will not be the brain ...He will not be the CEO. He will be the chairman of the board—he will select the CEO (an experienced executive). This process, which obviously has to be televised, will be *complete* by his inauguration—at which the transition to the next regime will start *immediately*.
>
> "...The CEO he picks will run the executive branch without any interference from the Congress or courts, probably also taking over state and local governments. Most existing important institutions, public and private, will be shut down and replaced with new and efficient systems. Trump will be monitoring this CEO's performance, again on TV, and can fire him if need be.

Duran notes that JD Vance, tech entrepreneur Balaji Srinivasan, and the Heritage Foundation's *Project 2025* all also proposed a systematic purge and dismantling of the federal bureaucracy. Yet the specific similarities between Yarvin's proposal and DOGE's role within the Trump regime are too striking to ignore. While I'm not aware of any direct links between Musk and Yarvin, several of the young men staffing DOGE have either worked for Thiel or expressed neo-reactionary views.

But despite its impact on the current Trump regime, neo-reactionary politics is not MAGA politics, as the tagline to James Pogue's 2022 *Vanity Fair* article noted. The key reason is that neo-reaction is not populist. The movement to Make America Great Again, Trump's political base, is a classic example of right-wing populism, i.e., a movement that combines calls to intensify oppression with twisted forms of anti-elitism. MAGA politics is about defending privilege and attacking those who are seen as threatening it from below, but it also feeds on people's sense of disempowerment, of being beaten down by a few people on top, a belief that those in power have betrayed "we the people" and must be stripped of their positions.

Neo-reactionaries, by contrast, believe firmly that elites should rule and "the people" (Nick Land's "howling irrational mob") should not. Since Trump first entered the 2016 presidential race, MAGA aimed to mobilize a mass movement to overturn the political establishment, liberal and conservative alike. This initiative included not just electoral campaigns but also broad-based organizing and physical protests that culminated in the January 6, 2021 attack on the U.S. Capitol in hopes of overturning the 2020 election results by force. But neo-reactionaries dismiss the whole idea of a popular uprising. As Yarvin wrote in June 2024, "Charlottesville [the 2017 Unite the Right rally] and January 6 were the last lame breaths of what John Adams called 'mobocracy' in America." What Yarvin envisioned wasn't a popular uprising, but rather to "hack" the system in order to break it.

Tech Capitalists Turn Toward Trump

The neo-reactionary movement is rooted in the computer technology sector, and its growing influence has been closely tied with tech capitalists' shift toward the political right. These developments have altered the Trump administration's relationship with the business community.

As I have discussed before, in 2016 "Trump's support within the big business community was—for any president and especially a Republican one—unusually limited, fragmented, and unstable." As one team of analysts argued, his capitalist supporters drew from "several layers of investor blocs with little in common other than their intense dislike of existing forms of American government." Partly for this reason, Trump's administration pushed policies that appealed to both supporters and opponents of neo-liberalism, rolling back environmental regulations and taxes for corporations and the wealthy on one hand, but restricting immigration and trade on the other. Trump's weak and disunified capitalist support also contributed to his administration's oscillation between interventionist and anti-interventionist approaches to foreign and military policy.

This situation changed in 2024, as former Democrat Elon Musk donated almost $200 million toward Trump's reelection and became one of his closest advisors, while high technology business leaders as a bloc swung behind Trump. Tech CEOs Mark Zuckerberg (Meta), Jeff Bezos (Amazon), Sundar Pichai (Google and its parent company Alphabet), and Musk held seats of honor at Trump's January 2025 inauguration, symbolizing their sector's new role at the center of the pro-Trump business faction. Also in 2024, billionaire investors in cryptocurrency and in the TikTok social media platform became supporters of Trump's reelection campaign, leading Trump to switch from opposition to support on both of these issues.

Lots of people have offered explanations for these tech sector shifts toward Trump. Here's a helpful summary from Aaron Bartley on Facebook:

> 1. The techno-feudalists have billions invested in crypto and without a big push from the government and the removal of all regulations, their money will be lost. Crypto has not mainstreamed in the way they expected, both because of Biden-era regulations on speculative investments and because the public just isn't into it. They need the state to manage the transition to crypto.
>
> 2. Similarly, they're gravely concerned about the trillions they've invested in AI [artificial intelligence]. Any amount of regulation or constraints by the state is seen as a death-knell. They know that AI has prompted a speculative bubble and they need the state to manage the bubble through subsidies and contracts. They also need the state to aggressively shield the US from

These changes have helped make the second Trump presidency more dangerous than the first, but they also point to potential divisions and conflicts within the Trump coalition—vulnerabilities that might help us develop better and more effective resistance strategies.

Liberals and Democratic Party leaders are framing this resistance as a struggle to defend democracy. But the U.S. government has always been an oligarchy (to borrow a term from Joe Biden's farewell address), in which a tiny capitalist elite holds most political power and has co-opted mass support and wielded systemic violence to serve its own ends—from genocide against the indigenous peoples of North America to genocide against Palestinians. At the same time, generations of social movements in the U.S. have fought and won real political space and social reforms that have mitigated some of the system's worst effects. The Trump regime's dictatorial power grab threatens these gains. If left unchecked it will have massive human costs, disproportionately hurt oppressed communities, and sharply constrict the space for political activity, especially radical organizing.

Neo-Reaction's RAGEful Vision

Neo-reaction (not to be confused with neoconservatism) has been around for almost two decades, but for most of that time it seemed an unlikely candidate to come anywhere near to reshaping the federal government apparatus. Here's some of what I wrote about the movement in "Ctrl-Alt-Delete," my 2017 report about the alt-right:

> Neoreaction is another dissident right-wing current with a vision of small-scale authoritarianism that has emerged online in the past decade, which overlaps with and has influenced the Alternative Right. Like the Alt Right and much of the manosphere, neoreaction (often abbreviated as NRx, and also known as Dark Enlightenment) is a loosely unified school of thought that rejects egalitarianism in principle, argues that differences in human intelligence and ability are mainly genetic, and believes that cultural and political elites wrongfully limit the range of acceptable discourse. Blogger Curtis Yarvin (writing under the pseudonym Mencius Moldbug) first articulated neoreactionary ideology in 2007, but many other writers have contributed to it. Neoreaction emphasizes order and restoring the social stability that supposedly prevailed before the French Revolution, along with technocratic and futurist concerns such as transhumanism, a movement that hopes to radically 'improve' human beings through technology....
>
> "Neoreactionaries, who are known for their arcane, verbose theoretical monologues, appear to be mostly young, computer-oriented men, and their ideas have spread partly through the tech startup scene. PayPal co-founder and Trump supporter Peter Thiel has voiced some neoreactionary-sounding ideas....
>
> "[Unlike many alt-rightists,] neoreactionaries all regard regular people as utterly unsuited to hold political power—'a howling irrational mob' as NRx theorist Nick Land has put it. Some NRxers advocate monarchy; others want to turn the state into a corporation with members of an intellectual elite as shareholders.

In the same report, I noted that neo-reactionaries were less likely than alt-rightists to support Donald Trump and might or might not share most alt-rightists' commitment to white nationalism and antisemitism, but also that many alt-rightists regarded neo-reaction as "a related movement that offers many positive contributions." Alt-rightist Gregory Hood (Kevin DeAnna) described neo-reaction, perhaps presciently, as "absolutely core to understanding...how power functions." I however concluded that neo-reaction seemed "too esoteric to have much of a political impact" on its own. My mistake.

In the interval, the alt-right as a significant force has collapsed, yet neo-reactionary ideology and Curtis Yarvin's ideas specifically have continued to percolate and spread within the tech world and beyond, such that James Pogue in a 2022 *Vanity Fair* article described them as "foundational to a whole political and cultural scene." Peter Thiel and other venture capitalists such as David Sacks and Marc Andreessen have boosted NRx's rise. Vice President JD Vance, a former Thiel employee whose 2022 U.S. Senate run was heavily funded by Thiel, has cited Yarvin as a political influence, and the two are or have been friends.

Many of Yarvin's pronouncements over the years closely foreshadow what the Trump regime, and DOGE specifically, have been doing. From that 2022 James Pogue article:

> [T]he way conservatives can actually win in America, [Yarvin] has argued, is for a Caesar-like figure to take power back from this devolved oligarchy and replace it with a monarchical regime run like a start-up. As early as 2012, he proposed the acronym RAGE—Retire All Government Employees—as a shorthand for a first step in the overthrow of the American 'regime.' What we needed, Yarvin thought, was a 'national CEO, [or] what's called a dictator.'

As journalist Gil Duran notes, "Elon Musk's DOGE is just a rebranded version of RAGE. He demands mass resignations, locks career employees out of their offices, threatens to delete entire departments, and seizes total control of sensitive government systems and programs."

Duran goes on to quote a 2022 Yarvin essay that envisioned a "butterfly revolution" under a second Trump administration: "We've got to risk...a full reboot of the USG [U.S. government]. We can only do this by giving *absolute sovereignty to a single organization*—with roughly the powers that the Allied occupation authorities held in Japan and Germany in the fall of 1945." As Duran notes, "The World War II metaphor casts the federal

to others until only the bare walls and some dust bunnies are left. For you, there's deep truth in the phrase "May their memory be a blessing"—not their things.

Still, things matter to others.

More than a handful of folks—all at separate times over the seven days, and none of whom know each other—come rushing to you in the living room with a concerned look on their face. "Do you know there's a Jewish thing in the family room [kitchen, bedroom, ...]?" They are clearly trying to protect you, as if a Jewish thing stealthily crept into the house and bodes ill. "Yes, we're Jewish," you reply each time, as nonchalantly as you can, curious as to the response, which each time is the same. Incomprehension that someone, or you, could be a Jew, that Jewish things are in people's home in this midwestern town, and that you don't seem to be worried too.

***

She was the only other person in the ancient-looking basement locker room. You had that in common. You both swam laps, and at the precise same time. There was that in common too. And you both always awkwardly smiled at each other, until you broke the ice almost at once. It was then that you discovered you shared something else: the ability to speak German, though hers was mother-tongue exacting, and yours was rusty schlecht. Or shlekht in Yiddish, which you should have learned from your dad, but you only heard it used when his mother, your bubbe, "spoke" to him, always kvetching and screaming, as she transferred a lifetime of trauma onto her son.

Your pool pal was visiting the States from Berlin for a couple years while her partner studied here. You'd spent two years in Berlin with your former partner while they studied there. This commonality forged an empathy, not around that German city—she loved it, and you felt nothing but the unquiet dead blurring with the continuity of hate or exoticism toward the few remaining Jews—yet instead around how it feels to be away from home with no real purpose. You remembered swimming laps regularly in Berlin, especially at the first pool that Jews were banned from in Nazi times; it still boosted a 1930s' fascist-realist sculpture carved outside its entrance, only a few blocks from where Jews were deported to death camps.

For weeks and then months, your friendship grows, always in this locker room. Time stretches out between when you arrive to change into your swimsuits and when you actually stop talking to get into the pool. Some days, you chat so long that you miss the allotted lap time. You share what seems like everything, from politics to ideas, from joys to hardships, and no matter how tough the emotions, she maintains an upbeat spirit. You realize how much you look forward to seeing each other—so much so that you finally begin speaking of getting together outside the dank basement, including visiting her when she returns to Germany. Autumn turns to winter turns to spring, as both your relationship and the locker room warm up.

"It's hot as a gas chamber in here!" she exclaims one day, smiling, with a big wink of camaraderie.

You've never been good at hiding your feelings, which in split seconds appear on your face. From the way her face reacts, you're sure you have no need for words. You have none.

She repeats it, smiling more broadly, "Hot as a gas chamber, right?"

A silence fills the space between you.

"It's just a saying. You know. You have sayings here too, yes? It's a saying we use in Germany. It doesn't mean anything."

The locker room walls close in. Her smile is gone.

"I grew up saying it; my parents said it. I've used it my whole life."

She starts swimming at a different time and never speaks to you again, even though you never found the words to say something, anything, to her that last day, even the two words—although you know it was clear—"I'm Jewish."

***

The Signal thread is abuzz with shared intel.

A Confederate flag spotted on the back of a truck driving through town. "Some of us are heading out to keep an eye on him and get his license plate number."

Rumor of another white supremacist coming to do a public event. "Can we put pressure on the venue to cancel? If not, we'll need to ramp up our organizing."

Anti-Black graffiti on a Black person's front door. "There's going to be a rally and wheat pasting to counteract this racist shit. Let's reach out to see if the person needs other support."

The Signal group is a hodgepodge of progressive, lefty, socialist, communist, and anarchist folks. It's held together not by shared politics, other than the glue of antifascism, but a shared spirit of solidarity, in theory and practice.

Since you walk a lot, you're often the first to see white supremacist "street art." You snap a photo, upload it to the Signal chat with the location, and try to disappear the propaganda. It helps that you carry an array of stickers and a Sharpie; your keys will also do. And when something is too high, you know one of your fellow Signal pals who's good at climbing will deal with it soon, and others will then keep an eye on that general vicinity in case new racist materials go up. It's all quite cooperative, amicable, and efficient.

One day, you spot an image of a skull. There's a hammer and sickle in one of its empty eye sockets, and a Magen David, or Star of David, in the other. The sticker bears the name of a group known for its explicit antisemitism: Blood and Soil.

When you send the image to the Signal thread, rather than the usual emojis of support, self-described white allies urge caution. "Maybe we shouldn't be taking down anti-

Black stickers after all?" "What if Blacks don't want us to?" "What if removing such stickers means that these racists will take it out on Black people, maybe even with physical violence?"

Never mind that there are Blacks members of the Signal chat whom these allies feel compelled to speak for and that "Blacks" are suddenly now allegedly opposed to us taking down racist literature, with no mention that some Blacks are thrilled to help smash such symbols. Never mind that no one raised these concerns about any other instances of white supremacist materials; or that a Jew had spotted, shared, and said it felt scary awful to see this skull—threatening even—and yet it had felt super empowering to remove it. Never mind that no one thought to ask if "Jews" would feel endangered by fascist literature being trashed, or comforted that others would want to trash it.

It was almost as if no one saw what was right in front of their eyes: a simple six-pointed Jewish star in the hollowed-out eye of a dead person.

***

It's your birthday, which you've never liked and typically spend alone, trying to ignore the trauma that it brings up for you. You're driving between Michigan and Wisconsin to visit a sister. On impulse, you decide to mark this day after all by stopping halfway on the outskirts of Chicago to honor your ancestors—some anarchists, some Jewish, and some Jewish anarchists. It feels right on this day when usually everything feels wrong.

At the Waldheim Cemetery (now anglicized to Forest Home), you first pay homage to the Haymarket martyrs as well as Lucy Parsons, Voltairine de Cleyre, and Emma Goldman, all lying near each other. The tree branches are bare, the sky gray, the mementos that other radicals have left lie withered in this wintery-deserted graveyard. As is your ritual, you pick up the first stones that call out to you, and with intentionality, place one on each tombstone or monument. There are already other stones, especially on the granite markers of the Jewish anarchists. You feel in good company with recent comrade-visitors and your rebel predecessors.

Then you head over to the Jewish Waldheim Cemetery, or what more precisely could be called a shtetl for displaced persons who tried to make Chicago their home. Its unkempt two hundred acres contain some 175,000 Jews in what are actually almost two hundred associated cemeteries (apparently Jews couldn't agree on anything then either, but also couldn't imagine being without each other). The burial ground follows the history of Jewish refugee/undocumented waves, bookended with its start in the 1870s and tapering off by the 1950s. As Jewish mutual aid societies faded away, and tight-knit Jewish immigrant communities dispersed or died off, Jewish Waldheim nearly perished too. These days, it gets relatively few visitors, much less new occupants. It's now more of a time capsule, filled with those who escaped pogroms, forced conscription, the Holocaust, and other surges of genocidal violence.

There's something so schlepy-beautiful about this place, though. For one, there's no rhyme or reason for gravestone placement; the cemetery instead mimics the bustle of an overcrowded, congested nineteenth-century city. Many of the gravestones also boast little porcelain or tintype photos of the deceased, who by white Christian supremacist attractiveness standards might be considered disheveled, peasant-like, frumpy, but who stare out at you as if worrying, "Have you eaten? You look so skinny!" And the way you find a particular person's grave is a complex, nonlinear, always-in-need-of-reinterpretation system that would warm most Jews' hearts. It involves seven or more layers of numbers and letters that don't correspondence to what you see on the tombstones, because the system relies on scraps of paper taped or glued like post-its to the graves, and thus prone to falling off and composting with the dead below.

The first time you came here to find your great-grandparents' graves, it took you about two hours of fruitless wandering—even though they were supposedly right in or next to a socialist Jewish workers' section. You then spotted the only other person around for miles, a groundskeeper with a huge cross around his neck, and the two of you wandered for another hour or so. Once you found their graves, the groundskeeper decided to stay with you for an additional hour to chat about the history of this place and honor your great-grandparents because "I never see anyone coming to visit their people anymore."

This time, it again takes you about an hour. Numbers and letters have disintegrated even further, and there's no groundskeeper, but you know you're looking for two stones, side by side.

Then you see them: one gravestone upright, and the other knocked over.

Your great-grandfather is flat on his face. All you can see is his back, the smooth-gray rear of his stone, which is the height of person, lying as if murdered. His porcelain photo—his head—has been smashed to the ground. Your great-grandmother's porcelain-photo face—the woman who died just before you were born and so you were given a middle name to honor her (Bracha, meaning "blessing")—seems to be contorting with sorrow.

Your body feels as frozen as the January soil. Your mind transports you to the numerous Jewish cemeteries you've visited across eastern Europe, with most of their stones also knocked over, also smashed, broken by generations of antisemites, and yet somehow you are right here, wondering how out of the nearly two hundred thousand Jews, the fascists knew which were your great-grandparents, because plainly they're after you—a living, breathing anarchist and antifascist. They're probably still here, hiding behind trees, waiting to attack you, but how did they know you were coming here today? You feverishly survey the area around your great-grandparents' stones: six or seven others are toppled in an intentional pattern.

Kevan Thakrar is a key voice from inside the UK prison system today, writing extensively on the conditions endured by people held in the worst prisons in the country. He is an IWW/IWOC member and has worked closely with groups such as Bristol Anarchist Black Cross. You can read a recent article from Kevan, "A Decade of Discrimination Amounting to Torture", here.

UK prisoners can be emailed using emailaprisoner.com

Birthday: March 9

Address:

Kevan Thakrar A4907AE
HMP Whitemoor
Longhill Road
March, PE15 0PR
England
UK

Ryan Roberts

Ryan Roberts is a UK anarchist prisoner serving a 14-year sentence after fighting back against the police at a demonstration against a policing bill in Bristol in 2021.

UK prisoners can be emailed using emailaprisoner.com

Birthday: March 14

Address:

Ryan Roberts A5155EM
HMP Swaleside
Brabazon Road
Eastchurch
Isle of Sheppey
ME12 4AX
UK

Azat Miftakhov

Azat Miftakhov is a Russian anarchist who was arrested and tortured for allegedly breaking a window in an office of Putin's United Russia party, and has now been given a six-year prison sentence for this alleged act. If you wish to send a message to Azat, the best thing to do is probably to contact his support team at helpazat@miftakhov.org.

Birthday: March 22

Mikita Yemelyanau

Mikita Yemelyanau is an anarchist political prisoner from Minsk, Belarus, serving a four-year sentence for a sabotage action against a detention center and for throwing paint at a court. Both actions were in solidarity with Dzmitry Palijenka, another anarchist political prisoner. On 11 March 2022, Mikita was sentenced to 2 more years in prison for gross violation of prison rules.

Letters written in any other language than Russian or Belarusian may not reach prisoners in Belarus, but if you contact Belarus ABC at belarus_abc(AT)riseup.net or using this online form, they can translate your message and send it on for you.

Birthday: March 24

Address (for Russian or Belarusian letters only):

Emelyanov Nikita Vladimirovich
ST-1, 230023 Grodno, ul. Kirova 1

cover photo via Unicorn Riot

The DOGE and the Neo-Reactionaries

March 3, 2025

Matthew Lyons at *Three Way Fight* looks at the the emerging Trumpian state, the growing role of Musk, the influence of Neo-Reactionary thinkers, and offers an analysis of DOGE.

by **Matthew Lyons**

I anticipated a drive toward dictatorship, but I didn't anticipate DOGE.

When Donald Trump was reelected president, I (like many other people) knew he would make a grab for power beyond anything in his first term. I've traced Trump's increasingly intimate relationship with far-Right politics, from his mutually beneficial arrangement with the alt-right in 2016 to his efforts in 2024 to remake the Republican Party itself as his personal vehicle. Like many other critics, I noted that the erosion of structural checks on presidential power, coupled with supporters' years of planning on how to seize control of the federal bureaucracy, would make the second Trump term a lot more authoritarian than the first.

What I didn't expect was that Trump would subcontract the dynamic core of this authoritarian power drive to *another* narcissistic billionaire. That he would not only use Elon Musk's "Department of Government Efficiency" to attack the civil service but give its team of outside operatives carte blanche to seize semi-autonomous (and potentially lucrative) control over government agencies, databases, and payment systems. That just a few weeks after the inauguration, we'd be talking not just about a coup, but a Trump-Musk coup.

I don't know why Trump chose to do this, whether it was admiration for what Musk did to Twitter, Inc. or simple laziness. Or why so far he's been okay with having a deputy who continually threatens to upstage him, whether Musk is using bribery or blackmail or is just really good at stroking Trump's fragile, fragile ego. I don't know whether this alliance will last months or years or fall apart next week, and what will happen when it ends.

But setting personalities aside, from a political standpoint DOGE's role in the new regime's power grab points to two interrelated changes in the Trump project that deserve close attention:

- First, while MAGA movement ideology centers on right-wing populism, in that it combines supremacist attacks on various oppressed groups with distorted anti-elitism, DOGE is guided by self-described neoreactionaries, whose ideology glorifies elites and rejects populist appeals in principle.
- Second, while the first Trump administration was backed by an unstable coalition of competing capitalist interests, at this point high technology capitalists closely aligned with neoreactionary politics appear to be at the head of the pro-Trump business bloc.

anarchists and anti-fascists in 2024, and a more detailed collection of news from anarchist prisoners in November-December.

A rally was held at the prison in Chemnitz, Germany, in support of Nele, an anti-fascist facing extradition to Hungary as part of the ongoing Budapest Antifa case.

Uprising Defendants

See Uprising Support for more info, and check out the Antirepression PDX site for updates from Portland cases. You can also check With Whatever Weapons for regularly-updated zines listing current prisoners. To the best of our knowledge they currently include:

Tyre Means 49981-086
USP Victorville
US Penitentiary
P.O. Box 3900
Adelanto, CA 92301

Margaret Channon 49955-086
FCI Tallahassee
P.O. Box 5000
Tallahassee, FL 32314

Malik Muhammad #23935744
Snake River Correctional
777 Stanton Blvd
Ontario, OR 97914

Montez Lee 22429-041
FCI Ray Brook
Federal Correctional Institution
PO Box 900
Ray Brook, NY 12977

Matthew White #21434-041
USP Terre Haute
PO Box 33
Terre Haute, IN 47808

Matthew Rupert #55013-424
USP Big Sandy
US Penitentiary
P.O. Box 2068
Inez, KY 41224

José Felan #54146-380
FCI Terre Haute
Federal Correctional Institution
P.O. Box 33
Terre Haute, IN 47808

David Elmakayes 77782-066
FCI McKean
Federal Correctional Institution
P.O. Box 8000
Bradford, PA 16701

Khalif Miller #70042-066
USP Big Sandy
U.S. Penitentiary
P.O. Box 2068
Inez, KY 41224

Alvin Joseph 1002016959
Hays State Prison
PO Box 668
Trion, GA 30753

John Wade #1003510744
PO Box 3877
Jackson, GA 30233

Aline Espinosa-Villegas #22814-509
FMC Carswell
P.O. Box 27137
Fort Worth, Texas 76127

Address letter to Angel, address envelope to Aline A Espinosa-Villegas.

Mujera Benjamin Lunga'ho #08572-509
FCI Forrest City Medium
Federal Correctional Institution
P.O. Box 3000
Forrest City, AR 72336

Christopher Tindal 04392-509
FCI Cumberland
PO Box 1000
Cumberland, MD 21501

Upcoming Birthdays

Reverend Joy Powell

As a pastor and a consistent activist against police brutality, violence and oppression in her community, Rev. Joy Powell was warned by the Rochester Police department that she was a target because of her speaking out against corruption. On many occasions Rev. Joy had held rallies and spoke out against the police brutality and "police justifications" in Rochester NY. As a result, Rev. Joy was accused and convicted of 1st Degree Burglary and Assault.

An all white jury tried her; the state provided no evidence and no eyewitnesses. Rev. Joy was not allowed to discuss her activism or say that she was a pastor. The person that testified for her was not allowed to tell the court that he knew Rev. Joy through their activist work and through the church. Furthermore the judge Francis Affronti promised he was going to give her a harsh sentence because he did not like her. She was convicted and given 16 years and seven years concurrent.

The New York system uses Jpay, so you can send her a message by going t o jpay.com, clicking "inmate search", then selecting "State: New York, Inmate ID: 07G0632".

Birthday: March 5

Address:

Reverend Joy Powell #07G0632
Bedford Hills Correctional Facility
P.O. Box 1000
Bedford Hills, NY 10507-2499

Kevan Thakrar

Kevan Thakrar has been fighting for his life for the last 11 years after a wrongful conviction. In 2008 at the age of 20 Kevan began serving a life sentence, with a minimum term of 35 years, under the highly controversial "joint enterprise" doctrine.

Kevan's refusal to submit to racist abuse from prison guards has made him a target for reprisals. Notably, in 2010 he suffered a premeditated attack in his cell by HMP Frankland guards. When he fought back he was charged with attempted murder and GBH, and put in solitary confinement, where in one form or another he remains to this day. The charges were sufficiently brazen that a jury cleared him unanimously in a rare victory against the testimony of prison officers.

Despite his success in court, Kevan has been isolated in Closed Supervision Centres (a 'prison within a prison') across the country. Closed Supervisions Centres are the most extreme form of imprisonment in the UK, modeled on the "supermax" prisons in the United States, and Kevan's testimony is one of the few sources of information available to those on the outside. They are the ultimate punishment in the British prison system and subject people within them to brutal dehumanisation, degradation and demonisation.

Through fear and tears and confusion, you do a ritual for your great-grandfather. You tell him that you'll right this wrong, gently touch his cold "body" in goodbye and comfort, place a kiss on your great-grandmother's face.

You trudge through as many acres as you can on this bitter-cold birthday to see if there's more damage, and find two other spots where some half-dozen graves are kicked over. As you walk, thousands of sad, wise-old porcelain eyes tell you that they've seen this before.

Later, when you go to the 1950s-looking cemetery office to see about having maintenance raise your ancestor's stone from the dead, the woman behind the desk instantly nods her head as you say, "My great-grandfather's tombstone was knocked over ..." and completes your sentence "... by fascists. Such are the times. Again."

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On October 23 and 24, 2018, you visit dear friends in Pittsburgh at the tail end of a monthlong book tour about loss and mourning.

At social centers, free schools, and radical bookstores, you've held grief circles. You've witnessed, time and again, people making themselves bravely vulnerable in front of others, sharing stories and tears that they've never expressed. You're always struck by how much two seemingly simple acts—naming and talking about one's deepest hurts and absences, and giving oneself permission to be fully present with whatever emotions arise—have the capacity to aid people in giving meaning to and bearing pain. There's a reason that Judaism structures how we grieve so as to not leave one alone; so as to be embedded in community.

Your body has become a container for these stories. It's an honor. And it's a lot. So it feels good to be in a warm circle of friends, sharing a meal and laughter. It's what you need, you realize, to wholly integrate the stories that people have entrusted into your own bodily memory.

As the first evening with your friends winds down, one of them asks if it's OK to share a dilemma they're facing, and of course, you all say yes.

Just before you got to Pittsburgh, swastikas were painted on two anarchistic spaces, both of which include volunteer staffers and many visitors/users. Both spaces decided to cover up the tags and not tell anyone.

Your friend is distraught. Why, at a minimum, didn't the collectives alert folks coming into the buildings so that they could fully consent to the risk that fascists targeting spaces might imply? Why didn't they share photos of the graffiti widely with media or make public calls for community self-defense? Shouldn't this have been a rallying cry for collective outrage as well as solidarity against antisemitism and white nationalism? Isn't it a big deal?

Your friend is doubting the pain that their ancestors transmitted to them. How can a swastika become so detached from the targeting of Jews? How are we able to forget? You again witness the power of storytelling. You're distraught too.

So you and your friends devise a plan that respectfully but firmly demands that the collectives respond. The idea of action offers some relief to your friend. In hindsight, however, it's clear this was less about organizing a response than the comfort of what was, essentially, an informal grief circle —for yourselves and your ancestors.

The next day, your Jewish anarchist pals urge you to stay through Shabbat that weekend, not merely to keep processing the antisemitic incident, but especially to partake in the delight of radical, queer Jewish rituals. Stay, they nudge, to light candles, sing a capella songs together, and break communally from the time of capitalism for twenty-four-plus hours, moon to moon.

You're torn. You'd promised to do one last book event in nearby Toledo on Thursday night. Maybe you should cancel? It was a last-minute addition, and you're emotionally exhausted. Your Jewish guilt wins out, and you head northward, first to Ohio, and then home to mid-Michigan. Some twenty-four-plus hours later, you hear the news. In Pittsburgh, a white supremacist who hated both Jews and immigrants, walked into the Tree of Life building, a place housing several synagogues, where Jews engaged in immigrant solidarity alongside their sacred rituals, and murdered eleven Jewish people.

Symbols have a history, a weight. They flag meaning. They carry warnings.

They are deadly serious.

***

Antisemitism hurts.

It hurts in the innumerable ways that other racist logics or patriarchy hurt. Deep-seated, pernicious ways. It hurts in everyday ways, like a leaky faucet.

Drip ... drip ... drip ...Slow, steady, persistent.

Drip ... drip ... drip ...Torturously louder with each drop.

Drip ... drip ... drip ... Impossible not to hear, impossible not to go crazy.

The faucet appears fine to everyone else, no matter how many times you drag someone over to look at it. "See? See! That bit of moisture there in the sink? Look closely!" It's hard to explain. It seems so trivial, so microscopic. What harm could it do? There's a drain, after all.

Drip ... drip ... drip ...

"It's just a little drop of water. What's the big deal? Actually, is it even dripping at all?"

Each of your anecdotes is just one more drip until the sink is overflowing. The room is flooded. You are drowning, gasping for breath, in a pool of water no one will admit that they see. A repair person who told you "don't Jew me" when they handed you a bill. One of your best friends repeatedly

pushing Christmas on you, even after you mention that antisemites used to burn Christmas trees in village squares to scare your ancestors, and one time they put your kin in a synagogue and torched it. Supposed comrades telling you to "go back to Europe" although the last town your relatives escaped from before coming to the United States was razed to the ground and all of its Jews killed by the Nazis, and you've no idea all the places that your ancestors had to flee over the centuries and across continents due to inquisitions, empires, colonization, and notions of blood libels or racial purity. People being appalled by QAnon yet omitting the Jewish conspiracy bundled at its core, or back during Occupy Wall Street, ignoring the thinly veiled antisemitic conspiracy theories related to "finance capital." Or the man who pulled out a loaded gun, waved it in the air, and told you that he's going to kill all the Blacks and Jews who get in his way.

Antisemitism hurts, too, even in the most beautiful of moments, like the first time you visited the city of Chana on Crete. It felt instantly, inexplicably, like home. Not a home in the present—though it felt that way as well—but a home you had come from and long lived in. A home where you wanted to stay put. A home torn from you—the "you" that is made up of your ancestors.

You're standing outside the most dreamy squat you could ever imagine. It's perched on the highest point above the ocean, with an expansively breathtaking view, including toward the old city across the harbor. The squat is not only a vibrant social center but also a collective home for Greeks and folks without papers from other lands, and you're there at a gathering with hundreds of anarchists from across the Mediterranean, listening to their conversations about solidarity networks without borders for so-called immigrants and refugees. The building is enormous, with a gorgeous interior courtyard, and regal exterior; it's been home to monarchs, military, secret police, and fascists, with a prison in the basement. Now, in a flourish of poetic justice, it's in anarchist hands.

One of the local anarchists is standing by your side. "You're Jewish, right?" he asserts more than asks, followed by, "I'm sorry."

He points across the harbor, its waters dancing in the sun, at a tourist-romantic ancient neighborhood. "That was the old Jewish quarter. I'm sorry. We tried so hard to save you. We resisted the Nazis so hard in Greece, harder than most other places, and especially in Chana. But we lost. You were all murdered. I'm sorry."

His "sorry" is personal, to and for you, collapsing time. It's as if he can see into your bones and knows that this was in fact your home, many generations ago. That despite being alive, parts of you have always already felt dead. That you are one of the ghosts receiving this apology.

You're sorry too—that at some point your ancestors had to make the Sophie's choice, the impossible yet necessary nonchoice, time after time after time, of staying put or leaving. Some must have left, venturing north to places where they ultimately wouldn't be able to stay either, or you wouldn't be here. But you want to be here. Again. Still.

Antisemitism kills.

***

Cindy Barukh Milstein writes, agitates, and rages, while holding firm to love and solidarity as verbs. They are never at home in this world, which is why they fight so fiercely for other possible ones. Milstein is especially proud of having crafted numerous magical, caring spaces out of "nothing" with and for others, including curated anthologies like *Rebellious Mourning: The Collective Work of Grief* (AK Press), *Deciding for Ourselves: The Promise of Direct Democracy* (AK Press), and most recently, *Constellations of Care: Anarcha-Feminism in Practice* (Pluto Press). You can find them on IG at @cindymilstein, Mastodon at @cbmilstein@kolektiva.social, and/or Bluesky at @cbmilstein.bsky.social. They offer thanks to Wren Awry, Shane Burley, and Ami Weintraub for their insights on a draft of this essay.

Note: This piece was written before the signifier "October 7." If it had been penned after that date, it (sadly, painfully) would have included more examples of "antisemitism hurts." The essay was originally published in my edited anthology *There Is Nothing So Whole as a Broken Heart: Mending the World as Jewish Anarchists* (AK Press, 2021).

On the zine version, the front-cover art is borrowed from Municipal Adhesives (https://www.etsy.com/shop/Muni and the back-cover art is borrowed from Naomi Rose Weintraub (https://sites.google.com/view/naor with love and solidarity.

Why Mahmoud?: Ransom and Retribution

March 17, 2025

Analysis from the Lake Effect Collective on the recent attack on Mahmoud Khalil at Columbia University.

Mahmoud Khalil, a participant in Columbia's path-breaking Palestine solidarity encampment, has been abducted from his home, labeled a "national security threat," detained and shipped to Louisiana pending deportation. This abduction and its justification distill four years of state responses to the movements to defend the Weelaunee forest and to end the genocide in Palestine. Under the new administration in particular, the Department of Justice has made terrorism charges against cartels and gangs, as well as RICO-charge recipients, their fast-tracked priority, with the stated goal of "total elimination." Samidoun, the cartels, and the forest defenders are all grouped together as internal enemies of the Trump administration's new American experiment.

Some may be inclined to ask: why Mahmoud? We believe the answer is self-evident. A protestor, a graduate student at an elite East

Prison in Virginia continue to set themselves on fire in the hope of being transferred, months on from when the story began to attract outside interest. He has also written on the Virginia prison system's attempts to control the story and censor his access to outside media.

Texas prisoner Jason Renard Walker continues to publish writing exposing abuses in the Texas prison system, including a recent suicide at the Powledge Unit, the effects of meth addiction in prison, and a new rule allowing prisons to punish prisoners for use or possession of "unknown substances", which means that they can discipline prisoners without having any need to actually prove the use of drugs.

Mongoose Distro recently published a letter to ODRC director Annette Chambers-Smith from anarchist prisoner Sean Swain, as well as new collage art from Kit Brixton.

It's Going Down recently published a new interview with Tempestad, an anarchist and ex-prisoner living in Mexico City.

Jailhouse Lawyers Speak have shared a report from a prisoner at Ware State Prison, Georgia, who writes: "The warden & cert staff @ ware state prison goes to these guys and asked how to stop the violence. So these take it upon themselves to come together and create peaceful dormitories with no violence. Now that it's no violence in the dormitories. Now they come back and tell since it's no violence. We going to pack y'all up and move y'all to a new dormitory where it can potentially start some violence. Somebody make this make sense to me. I'm convinced that GDC is helping start these gang wars and violence. This need to be investigated!"

JLS commented: "Perfect example on how prisoncrats play on people in prison that want less violence. Prisoncrats give room for people inside to end the violence, when they're under pressure, then turn right back around to disturb it once obtained. This happens across the country time and time again."

IDOC Watch have published an article on the case of Antonio D. Jones, who has served 21 years after being wrongfully convicted in spite of evidence clearing him.

Unicorn Riot report that a new source has come forward with evidence about the innocence of Philip Vance, who was wrongfully convicted of a 2002 murder in Saint Paul.

International

Samidoun continues to cover the mass releases of Palestinian prisoners, including 183 prisoners freed on February 1st, 369 prisoners freed on February 15th, and 620 prisoners freed on February 22nd. They also report that the Palestinian Authority has stopped payments to prisoners' families.

The final decision in the case of Georges Abdallah, a Lebanese revolutionary prisoner held in France who was due to be released on appeal, has now been postponed to 19 June.

Salvatore Vespertino, an Italian anarchist who escaped after being given an eight-year sentence for the 2017 attack on a fascist bookshop, has been arrested in Spain.

Francesca Nadin, a UK prisoner held in pre-trial detention for alleged participation in actions against Israeli arms company Elbit Systems, has published a new article, "I am a political prisoner, not a hero." A Running Down the Walls event was recently held in Manchester, raising nearly £600 for the Filton 18 prisoners. There's also a call to support Sean Middlesbrough and Jordan Devlin, two pre-trial Palestine solidarity prisoners who are wrongfully listed as convicted instead of pre-trial, meaning that they are being held in worse conditions.

The British branch of IWOC are organizing a solidarity campaign for Kevan Thakrar, a UK prisoner held in brutal conditions of long-term solitary confinement. There's also a call for letters and emails in support of Ryan Roberts, a prisoner serving a 14-year sentence from the Kill the Bill movement in 2021, who requires urgent medical attention. Ryan's supporters are asking for people to send them cute/silly/fun pictures to send on to Ryan, which can be sent via DM to ftss.28 on instagram, or emailed to ftss2028 [at] gmail.com.

A gathering in solidarity with Casey Goonan was held in Connemara, Ireland.

Greek anarchist prisoner Dimitris Chatzivasiliadis has published a new text calling for a revolutionary union of anarchists. A new zine of letters from the anarchist struggle in Greece is available on archive.org, and *The Final Straw Radio* recently interviewed a member of the Solidarity Fund for Imprisoned and Persecuted Revolutionaries, or Tameio, on the ongoing Ampelokipoi case and repression in Greece.

In Finland, graffiti has been painted in solidarity with Ola, held since November 2024 on charges connected to an action against Elbit Systems.

Russian anarchist prisoner Ruslan Siddiqui has shared a first-hand account of his actions to sabotage the war machine, as well as his torture at the hands of the state.

ABC Belarus have published an overview of repression against

P.O. Box 207, Columbia, SC 29202
3. Deadline: May 19, 2025 - Get your letters in by the deadline!
4. *Submit your support letter online: Support Parole

Get Involved

1. Organize Local Letter Writing Circles: Gather your community to host letter writing events.
2. Spread the Word: Share this flyer far and wide.
3. Stand Up for Liberation: Your collective voice can help secure Sundiata's freedom.
4. Mutual Aid: Give funds to Sundiata's legal, communication and initiative costs - Unchain Sundiata Jawanza

For more information contact: FreeJawanza@protonmail.com

Pendleton Uprising Anniversary

The Defense Committee to Free the Pendleton 2 have put out a call for events to mark the 40th anniversary of the uprising at Indiana State Reformatory, now Pendleton Correctional Facility. They write:

> On February 1, 1985, people held captive at the notoriously racist maximum-security Indiana State Reformatory rose up to stop the murder of a beloved jailhouse lawyer and political prisoner named Lokmar Abdul-Wadood Yazidi, who was being beaten to death by white supremacist guards. The white supremacist guards were organized into a clandestine cell in the prison called the Sons of Light, which included many high ranking officers, and regularly brutalized Black prisoners without cause. Only a few months later, in French v. Owens, the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals found the prison to have been violating the 8th Amendment Constitutional rights of all people in custody there over a period of several years, by subjecting them to cruel and unusual punishment in the form of "overcrowding and double-celling, unwholesome food, excessive use of mechanical restraints, medical neglect, and continuous threats to inmates' safety.
>
> The Pendleton 2, John "Balagoon" Cole and Christopher "Naeem" Trotter, led a group of concerned prisoners in stopping the Sons of Light from killing Lokmar, and then they were forced to take over a cell house with hostages in order to prevent the guards from killing them too. A stand-off ensued which lasted about 16 hours, with a negotiated end that left everyone involved alive.
>
> Two years later, Balagoon and Naeem were wrongfully convicted by an all-white jury in a town run by the Ku Klux Klan and their ilk. They were sentenced to 88 and 142 years, respectively, and then thrown into solitary confinement and held there illegally for decades.
>
> The Defense Committee to Free the Pendleton 2 is calling for actions in solidarity with the Pendleton 2 on or around the 40th Anniversary of the Uprising, which is coming up on February 1, 1985. Solidarity actions could include a screening of the documentary The Pendleton 2: They Stood Up, an event to write letters to the P2 to keep their spirits up and keep the pigs off their backs, a banner-drop, or a rally! Reach out to us if your organization or group is putting on an action for the Pendleton 2 and we will feature it on our website and social media! Email us about your action at thependleton2@gmail.com.

Events organized in support of the 2 so far have included a letter-writing night in Bloomington, Indiana, and a film showing in Washington, DC.

Death Penalty

A number of death row inmates have recently had success with legal challenges. Richard Glossip, a prisoner on Oklahoma's death row, has been granted a new trial by the Supreme Court. In North Carolina, Hasson Bacote has had his death penalty sentence overturned after showing in court that racial discrimination played a significant role in his original trial. Jessie Hoffman, a Louisiana prisoner who is due to be executed in March, has just submitted a new federal complaint against Louisiana's use of nitrogen hypoxia in executions.

General Prison News and Abolitionist Media Updates

The Nebraska prison system has recently adopted full mail digitization, meaning that the addresses for sending mail to all Nebraska prisoners have changed. For instance, to send mail to Fran Thompson, you would need to write to:

Fran Thompson #93341
Nebraska Correctional Center for Women
Nebraska Department of Correctional Services
P.O. Box 247
Phoenix, MD 21131

The Appalachian Rekindling Project, an Indigenous organization in Eastern Kentucky, recently purchased land on the site of a proposed Federal prison, blocking construction on the FCI Letcher site. The land was acquired with support from Building Community Not Prisons, another group working to resist the proposed new prison.

Jailhouse Lawyers Speak are currently fundraising for a jailhouse lawyer being released from the North Carolina prison system, with donations to be sent via cashapp or venmo to arebelsworld. They are also asking for advice about transitional housing options in the Macon, GA area that will take in a mother and child.

The parents of Al'Mir Harris, a prisoner who died from medical neglect at Baldwin State Prison, Georgia at the end of 2024, have started a petition calling for prisoners to have more protection against medical neglect.

Kevin "Rashid" Johnson reports that prisoners at Red Onion State

Coast school, an immigrant, a Muslim with an Arab-sounding name: hurting Mahmoud Khalil is the perfect way for the new administration to appease its various component parts. He is both the spectre and its sacrifice. This is why the sympathetic media's references to his legal status and his marriage to a pregnant citizen are so clearly toothless. They invoke the same nationalist, islamophobic common sense whose institutional backers - from racist college professors to the President - engineered Mahmoud's detention.

The highest levels of the federal government ordered Mahmoud's deportation at the request of far-right Zionist 'watchdog' organizations, and with the tacit support of Columbia's administration. Regardless of its legality, its effects are clear: the Trump administration gets to leverage Bush-era Islamophobia without having to mention Islam outright, and invites self-styled Good American Citizens to help secure the nation against its enemies.

In the right-wing imagination, Mahmoud Khalil stands in for an urban, college-educated and tenuously-multiracial middle class, at odds with American foreign policy, loyal to foreign interests, and stubbornly opposed to the new administration's attack on the last dregs of the Reconstruction state. This is the bizarre political moment in which the President can order a Palestinian radical's detention one day and call Chuck Schumer a Palestinian the next. These acts seem ridiculous to us, but they're clear to their addressees: on the one hand, vengeance for the humiliation of pulling out of Afghanistan and of watching privileged college students run around American campuses with scarves on their heads; on the other, an escalation of the attack on economically-unproductive sectors of higher education.

Meanwhile the Democrats "expect the Department of Justice to work within the confines of the law and that due process is guaranteed." Their references to Mahmoud's abduction employ the same racist caricatures as their Republican colleagues, while pausing to note Mahmoud as an exception: he was always well-behaved, he did everything right, he never wore a mask, his citizen wife is eight months pregnant... These appeals to right-wing common sense are a stupid compromise made under pressure, but they won't reverse the crisis of legitimacy that lost the Democrats millions of votes in 2024.

While the Trump administration promises "many more of these arrests to come," before we take them at their word or presume the existence of some clear-headed surgical plan, it's worth considering whether they've stumbled into an extrajudicial measure they may not be ready to defend. The ICE agents who broke into Mahmoud's apartment initially believed he had a student visa, plodding ahead and following orders regardless once they learned he had a green card. We suspect this is a blunder.

Time and time again we've watched attempts at repression punch above their weight and invite unforeseen, catastrophic consequences. As we write this, the District Attorney's pursuit of RICO and domestic terror charges against Cop City protestors is languishing amidst a corruption scandal, while support for the arrestees and opposition to policing infrastructure has spread across the country. 2017's inauguration-day mass arrests, the President's bumbling attempt to suppress Portland's 2020 insurgency by disappearing militants into unmarked vans, and Tom Homan's premature efforts at made-for-TV arrests in Chicago all overextended the state's legal apparatus. Mahmoud Khalil's abduction could do the same.

Without our participation, the way forward is an unchecked downward spiral, as the Democrats' retreats into the rule of law absolve them of responsibility for its suspension, and the right is emboldened to employ counterterror techniques against any political activity that challenges their aims. But these tactical blunders also provide opportunities for us to turn this administration's mistakes into real crises, and to help a movement against this state and its rule of law emerge.

When the horror comes to light again. March 15 in Mexico: National Mourning

March 15, 2025

On March 5, the Warrior Searchers of Jalisco, a collective of family members of the disappeared, found a gruesome scene on a ranch in Teuchitlán, near Guadalajara, Jalisco. There, at a location supposedly searched by the state government in September 2024, they found three cremation ovens, clandestine graves, hundreds of human remains, and countless personal items and clothing, along with lists of names. The discovery of the forced recruitment and extermination camp run by the Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG) has sent shockwaves throughout Mexico. It is a moment that makes plain the profound severity of the crisis gripping the country and the collective trauma endured after nearly twenty years of the so-called "drug war." Civil society organizations have called for Saturday, March 15, to be a day of national mourning, with no place for politicians. The below text by Silvia L. Gil, published in *Revista Común* and translated by Scott Campbell, wrestles with the significance of what was found in Teuchitlán and what might be needed to counter the horror.

Several years ago, I heard a colleague say that in order to stop evil from reproducing itself, we had to stop denying it. She argued that our societies had put on a blindfold. Although this may be true in some parts of the world, it seemed to me that in Mexico what we needed was more of a truce, to stop staring horror in the face. That the problem was not exactly that we should look more or better, but that to survive in the face of what we already saw we should stop looking. At least for a while. This apparent paradox - pain surrounds us, but we cannot become so sensitized as we run the risk of being paralyzed - is very important in this time when violence and extreme precarity have intensified. There comes a point at

which we are unable to assimilate all that we see in a world of injustice. If in other latitudes with this situation - which we can call a global war against life - an answer is sought to the initial question of how to not deny the pain that is spreading throughout the world, in Mexico, the question did a double somersault: once we have seen it all, once we have moved beyond any fictional scenario, what kind of deep transformation of the human do we need so that the horror never repeats itself again?

A few days ago, the group of family members "Guerreros Buscadores de Jalisco [Warrior Searchers of Jalisco]" uncovered remains at a ranch known as La Estanzuela in the locale of Teuchitlán. There, they found crematorium ovens, innumerable graves (it is said that the same graves were used on several occasions), human remains, clothing, shoes of the victims... For years it was known that young people were captured through offers of employment. In the midst of extreme precarity, many opted to go to the place where the job was supposed to be offered. They never returned home. Others were taken by force. The ranch served as a forced recruitment center: only some survived - the strongest - who could ascend the criminal structure. Collectives of the family members of the disappeared affirm that this reality was know about for more than ten years. Authorities were alerted on countless occasions. A survivor has related that in the three years they were there, some 1,500 people were killed. It is impossible to have exact numbers, to know the scale of the horror. We can probably only know a bit of what happened by weaving the testimonies of the surviving victims. I wonder how long it will be before we can truly hear their words. To understand the objective of an atrocity of this type is very difficult. The absence of intelligibility is part of the same device of power: the less we understand, the more we are paralyzed in horror, the less sense we can make of what initially seems to respond to the irrational, to the monstrous and unnameable, the more space this kind of power will have to deploy itself.

Mexico currently has 123,808 disappeared and unaccounted-for persons, according to this month's report from the National Search Commission. It must be kept in mind that these numbers are always provisional. For the first time in the country a greater effort at identification is being made, but there are also innumerable families that make no reports because they are either afraid of the consequences or because they know doing so will yield no result. Jalisco is one of the most violent states in the country. And it is the state with the highest number of disappearances. The governor of Jalisco, from the Citizen's Movement party, Enrique Alfaro, ran out of Mexico almost the day after his term ended in October 2024. At the moment, he resides in Madrid, following the footsteps of Felipe Calderón and Enrique Peña Nieto. In recent times, Madrid seems to be a refuge not only for the international right, but also for the suspected collaborators with organized crime.

When we try to understand how a horror of this size is possible, there is a reading that is essential to make, but which, unfortunately, is not enough: we are facing a system of absolutely unbridled and cruel capital accumulation. What this "unbridled" means is that all limits that delimited the framework of this accumulation have been blown apart, so that any means to achieve it becomes possible. Atrocities are normalized because they are a means to open new market niches, but because above all, just like legal markets, the drive for more - greater extraction, greater yield, greater consumption - is a mandate that permanently mobilizes (Sayak Valencia has worked on this link between subjectivity, violence, and capital). The same competition within the market also appears between criminal groups: it is not enough to kill; one must kill in the most atrocious and sophisticated way. As Adriana Cavarero says, contemporary power is not content with killing because that would be too little. And this is where the idea that horror has only economic causes and that, therefore, it could be explained through class struggle, unfortunately falls short. I say "unfortunately" because if we could stop this horror with a policy of providing economic resources so that people did not have the need to respond to a call for dangerous employment, that would obviously be for the best. And that path, of course, must not be abandoned. But perhaps it is necessary to sharpen our analysis.

In principle, accumulating capital by means of extreme exploitation does not require the extra suffering and unspeakable violence that we find these days in the stories of Izaguirre's survivors. Subduing the will of the victims could be enough to exploit them as forced labor. However, we encounter an excess, limits that are annulled in the cruelest way, leaving a trail of ruined bodies, where whatever sense of humanity disappears. What kind of enjoyment is that which is activated when the humanity of another is annulled before me? What kind of human being is this that doesn't use the suffering of the other as a means to achieve something - which is in itself terrible - but whose work consists in making them suffer until nothing remains in that subject that could make them a carrier of life, that life that at some point was irreducible in its singularity? It is inevitable to think of Auschwitz. If for the Nazi extermination camp to be possible, it was necessary to build a long-standing policy of antisemitism, what is the ideology at work in Teuchitlán? Or is there not even a malevolent idea, a plan on earth, that explains this atrocity?

One line of research that circulates these days has to do with the cartels' training techniques. According to Michael W. Chamberlain, a human rights defender for decades in Mexico, they come from the army. In a recent interview, he explained

A new film has been made about the massive California hunger strikes of 2011-2013. From Oakland Abolition & Solidarity:

Over a decade in the making, two filmmakers have put together a humbling, grounded telling of the massive hunger strikes of 2011 -2013 that rocked California's prison system seeking to up-end business as usual and stop indefinite solitary confinement. We won't write a full review here but there are some major points that deserve attention and indeed, praise.

- The filmmakers did their homework and spent years and years working with the strikers, family and organizers. This is rare.
- The film itself gives center stage to the strikers and allows them to tell the story in their own words. The men of Pelican Bay open their hearts and pull no punches.
- So much footage from inside the prisons was obtained and included. Stunning never before seen footage of bargaining sessions between strike leaders and CDCr prisoncrats was also obtained and woven into the film. Even those of us who have done time or have done prison abolition work for decades were taken to school by the film.

But of course, the film definitely has its limits, not in terms of cinematic technique, but in terms of the ideological content it pushes as well as in terms of some thorny issues it conspicuously sidesteps such as the involvement of the so-called "gang" structures in building the strike.

For more information on the strike, go here.

Announcing the UPROAR Network

The new network initiated by Kevin "Rashid" Johnson, initially called People Against Prison Abuse, has now changed its name to United Prisoners & Relatives Organizing Against Repression (UPROAR). They write that their principles are:

1 - Direct confrontation: we don't just advocate, we organize, resist and apply pressure.

2 - Families as a force: this is a movement led by prisoners and their loved ones, not by detached NGOs, not-for-profits, or career activists.

3 - Inside-Outside-Unity: we connect the struggle inside to generate pressure outside, breaking the isolation prisons depend on.

4 - Material Resistance: we expose repression, mobilize communities, and dismantle systemic abuse not just describe it.

With this new name change we want to build UPROAR into an inside/outside prisoner support movement that will genuinely bring change to conditions within Amerika's razor wire plantations. Join us and help make a powerful and loud UPROAR!

To get into contactgo here.

Phone-Zaps

IDOC Watch has organized a phone zap in response to a lockdown at Plainfield Correctional Facility, as well as one in response t o freezing conditions at Buckingham Correctional in Virginia.

Lucasville Uprising Prisoners

Lucasville Uprising prisoner Keith LaMar was recently interviewed by *TruthOut* about The Injustice of Justice, a new animated short film that he narrated.

Tommie Blackmon, another prisoner convicted after the uprising, was recently moved, and is looking for donations to help him replace items lost during the move. You can reach out to him at:

Tommie Blackmon #185-291
Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction
Mail Processing Center (OMPC)
884 Coitsville-Hubbard Road
Youngstown, Ohio 44505

Greg Curry, another Lucasville prisoner, has published a statement aimed at explaining his criminal record following the the uprising.

Vaughn 17

An event was held in February at the Black Workers Center in DC, celebrating the anniversary of the Vaughn prison uprising. The event also served as a soft release for Jarreau "RUK" Ayers' upcoming book.

Vaughn 17 prisoner Alejandro "Ajay" Rodriguez-Ortiz recently suffered the loss of his mother, and was unable to attend a wake for her due to being attacked by the CERT team and moved to isolation as revenge for giving an interview to a journalist. You can donate to help support the Ortiz family through this time here.

Sundiata Jawanza Freedom Campaign

Sundiata Jawanza, a long-term jailhouse lawyer and incarcerated organizer held in the South Carolina system, is up for parole this year. From his website:

1. Host a Letter Writing Circle: Mobilize your community to write letters in support of Sundiata's parole. Every letter counts in the fight for justice.
2. Send your letters to:
   South Carolina Department of Probation, Parole and Pardon Services
   293 Greystone Boulevard,
   Columbia, SC 29210

for alleged actions against uranium mining and transportation. Legal funds can be sent via Venmo to @DNW91 or through https://pay.telmate.com/ui#/depos and by choosing inmate number 202501018.

A Louisiana grand jury has issued an arrest warrant for Dr Margaret Carpenter, a New York doctor who allegedly prescribed abortion pills online to a pregnant Louisiana minor, as well as the pregnant minor's mother.

There's a call for people to support Atlanta Forest defendant Vienna Forest, whose IDs remain confiscated making it impossible for her to work. Donations can be made to @ccwillneverbb via venmo.

AI and Policing

In Saint Louis County, Missouri, Chris Gatlin spent 17 months held in pre-trial detention after an AI facial recognition programme identified him as an assault suspect. The assault victim had initially pointed to two other people during a photo line-up as looking more like the suspect, and told reporters, "I felt I was being pointed into something." Gatlin is now suing the police department over the 17 months he was incarcerated without any real evidence.

Trans Prisoners Under Attack

A lawsuit filed by several trans women held in the federal prison system seems to be holding up Trump's plan to move trans prisoners. On February 24th, US District Judge Royce Lamberth issued a preliminary injunction preventing trans women from being transferred into male prisons, although it is likely that further appeals will be issued.

Action Continues Against Threats of Mass Deportation

"Immigration rights activists have banded together to conduct patrols throughout Los Angeles, and in a few instances, have stopped raids as they were happening. Community Self-Defense Coalition [said] they've busted two raids so far..." www.msn.com/en-us/public...

— It's Going Down (@igd.bsky.social) 2025-02-24T08:41:57.983Z

Demonstrations, mass student walkouts, and community organizing against ICE continue to play out across the US. *Unicorn Riot* has a report from a vigil at an GEO ICE detention center in Aurora, Colorado, and a protest was also recently organized against ICE's plans to reopen the former FCI Dublin in California as a detention center. *The Final Straw* recently broadcast an interview on resistance to ICE in Western North Carolina. In Los Angeles, the Community Self-Defense Coalition, comprised of over 60 grassroots groups, is organizing patrols of impacted neighborhoods, and have already stopped several ICE raids.

Activists in tenant unions + rapid response networks supported working-class people in #Colorado targeted by militarized #ICE raids. Agents used flash-bang grenades and went door-to-door at an apartment complex asking people for their IDs. The raid was spurred by far-Right conspiracy theories.

— It's Going Down (@igd.bsky.social) 2025-02-10T08:08:32.544Z

The Trump administration continues to push for increased mass deportations, is mulling potentially invoking the Insurrection Act, and has indicated plans to imprison immigrants at Guantanamo Bay and in the prison system of El Salvador. Recently, an open letter was published by former prisoners at Guantanamo:

Guantanamo is not just a prison - it is a place where law is warped, dignity is stripped, and suffering is hidden behind barbed wire. We lived it. We know the clang of metal doors, the weight of shackles, and the silence of a world that looked away. We know what it means to be caged without charge, without trial, without hope.

Now, the same system that stole years from our lives is expanding to imprison migrants, people seeking safety only to be sent to a place that exists outside the law designed to strip them of their rights. Guantanamo does not just allow abuse; it ensures cruelty. This executive order does not just enable injustice; it guarantees it.

Detaining migrants at Guantanamo denies them constitutional protections, trapping them in the same legal limbo we endured. This deliberate ambiguity enables abuse, just as it did with us. We know firsthand what happens when a system is designed to break people. This is not about security; it is about power, control, and using Guantanamo's darkness to conceal yet another injustice.

This decision is a direct result of the impunity the US has enjoyed for the crimes committed at Guantanamo. The failure to close the prison and reckon with its legacy has not only allowed these injustices to continue but has now enabled their expansion. Guantanamo should have been shut down long ago; instead, it is being revived for new victims.

We refuse to stay silent. We refuse to let others be swallowed by the same nightmare we endured. No one deserves to be thrown into a system built to erase them. We will not stop speaking. We will not stop fighting. We will not let Guantanamo's horrors be repeated.

Read the full letter here.

California Hunger Strike Film

that one of the main objectives of these techniques is "desensitization." It is striking that he did not in this case speak of "dehumanization": the emphasis is not on the loss of the qualities with which the "human" is defined, such as reason, *logos*, or coexistence in society, but what is absent is something particular: sensitivity. As when sight or smell is lost, a part of the individual is erased, but the whole remains. This means that a certain type of subject emerges, one that does not cease to be human, but that has eliminated the sensitive capacity from themself. They eliminate it in order to sustain a degree of cruelty that we can hardly conceive. It seems to me that here appears one of the most important questions at play in our time: the mutation of a kind of individual who cuts all connections that link them to the world and to themself. They are not even a disaffected subject: their capacity for affectation is still presupposed, which would have been displaced or even denied, but which is still present, even if only as a trace. It is as if this individual, in turn, having forgotten who they are, is obliged to eliminate their place in the world by means of every practice of cruelty. They remain somehow outside of the scene in which they are the protagonist.

It would seem that there is an idea that circulates in the midst of the horror: a way of understanding the human who manages, through the extreme practice of cruelty, "to work" every day in an extermination camp. According to testimonies, this could also imply the use of sexual violence: the other, the difference, is subjected for one's own benefit or enjoyment, to demonstrate superiority. What is revealed here seems to me to be fundamental to what we must consider as a society: it is not only the accumulation of capital at play, but a certain way of understanding the human as a hierarchy of the One over all those considered different. A kind of power based on the brutalization of the dispossessed, feminized body. It is important to remember that this kind of cruelty is repudiated by the immense majority of the population in Mexico and in the entire world, and that is important not to lose sight of in a moment of fascistization: life is sustained and defended in many ways at the same time. But it is fundamental to consider how this logic, this mutation of the subject, is uniting itself with the planetary processes of capital accumulation, intensifying them.

It is not only accumulating wealth in an economic sense, expanding markets without restraint, but also maintaining the authority of a power that, in order to dominate everything before it, needs to break the ties that bind it to the world that it inhabits. Appropriating difference, subjugating otherness, are conditions that don't have to do only with a monetary objective. It is a type of domination, a type of construction of authority, of demonstration of an untouchable power. It is the type of power upon which patriarchy is based, that power that uses sexual violence as an intimate appropriation of difference to confirm its authority. This means that disarming the horror also requires a profound transformation of who we are: a recovery and reorientation of a blocked sensibility.

The other big question during these days is a classic question of moral philosophy: what kind of ethical responsibility is demandable in an extreme situation? In other words: what about the municipal police, with the authorities who saw that the kids at the truck stop in Guadalajara didn't return? I believe that what has happened in Jalisco reveals not only that there is one power, but that, when we speak of "colluding powers," we must integrate how the chains of command are also chains of threat, extortion, and blackmail. They are not just about free individuals choosing between good or evil. It is very dangerous for us, as society, to morally judge the actions of a person who surely finds themself under threat or in life conditions that we don't know about. From a Kantian position, we should probably die before going against the universal principles that govern our actions. We should not do to someone that which we would not accept for ourselves. But perhaps this posture is too heroic and individualist, and forgets that very possibly it is not only our own life at stake, because others could depend on it, those that we have in mind when we are facing death - a daughter, a dependent father, a brother. When we say that they are enlarged chains, we must understand that an extermination center is sustained through the silent penetration of violence that has been occupying a territory. Many studies have emphasized that if organized crime produces something it is the deep cracking of communities through suspicion, fear, silence. Once again appears the pretense of power to make life a project where the minimum bonds of social cohesion are broken. Only a completely broken society can be the basis of that project of domination.

And here appears the ethical question we need to ask ourselves: How do those of us respond who are not - at least for the moment - under the threat of the horror? What massive actions do we set in motion to say no, that we resist the psychic mutation activated by this ideology of domination, that we are going to defend the youth, the friends and sisters, that we are going to forge again our connections to become stronger and stronger, that the power of the markets does not seduce us nor do we want the enjoyment that violently annuls the other [*al otro*], the others [*las otras*]? How to affirm, so that it is clear, that we are counterposing, with all our strength and difficulties, another idea of the world, without guarantees, but with determination, one that, in addition to stopping the unlimited accumulation of capital profits, reconsiders our place in the world from a position that rejects violence against otherness? How to insist that this is why this past March 8th a struggle was held that has the capacity to at the same time be against economic exploitation, heteropatriarchy, and racism? A struggle to promote a subject that is not only not subjected to extreme precarity, but also contrary to the symbolic organization aimed at annihilation? How to sustain our ethical contention against a war that spreads out over life?

This March 15, National Mourning in the streets, counterposing our collective force against the horror and violence.

Trump, the Tech-Right, and the Post-Neoliberal Order

March 14, 2025

In this episode of *The Beautiful Idea*, we present an interview with author Jamie Merchant, author of *Engame: Economic Nationalism and Global Decline* and numerous articles at *The Brooklyn Rail*. Merchant argues that we have entered a post-neoliberal age, with both Trump and Biden abandoning many of the touch-stones of corporate globalization that defined the past several decades.

But what comes next? During our discussion we talk about how and why Bidenism failed following the upheavals of 2020 and the rise of the Tech-Right as a bloc within the Trump administration. We map out what this formation wants and how it connects to the State's push to expand the American tech industry and in particular, Artificial Intelligence (AI).

We also unpack what it would mean to create new forms of autonomous class based street politics, as demonstrations against ICE and Tesla continue to grow.

cover photo via Marc Fischer

Final Straw: Military Decruitment, Trump 2.0 and Resisting New Empire

March 14, 2025

Long-running anarchist radio show and podcast *The Final Straw* speaks with a member of About Face.

This week, we're featuring an interview with Fig, an anarchist and member of the anti-Imperialist US veterans organization About Face to talk about decruitment, the work of About Face and an assessment of shifts in military priority under the lead of Hegseth towards the southern US border and the Trump administration 2.0's multi-polar spin. There's a lot here and we'll have a transcript in the near future.

- About Face: https://aboutfaceveterans.org/
- GI Rights Hotline: https://girightshotline.org/
- Military Law Task Force of the NLG: https://nlgmltf.org/
- a recent Politico article considering some military focus shifts discussed in this chat

Past veteran interviews on TFSR:

- Graham Clumpner pt 1 & pt 2 (2020)
- Eddie Falcon (2013)

Photo by Diego González on Unsplash

On Second Anniversary of Mass Arrest in Atlanta, Multiple RICO Defendants File Civil Lawsuits Seeking Damages Against Police and the City

March 7, 2025

Report on the filing of recent lawsuits against the ongoing repression of activists fighting the Cop City project in Atlanta, GA. Originally posted to *Agency*.

Wednesday marked two years since the sweeping, unconstitutional arrests of 23 festival-goers at the South River Music Festival in Atlanta, for their alleged involvement in political organizing against the proposed Atlanta Public Safety Training Center, otherwise known as 'Cop City'. All 23 arrested on March 5th, 2023 for domestic terrorism have not as of yet been indicted on those charges. In August 2023, the Georgia Attorney General issued the largest RICO (Racketeer Influenced Corrupt Organizations) indictment of its kind against 61 people, including the 23 festival-goers, for their perceived involvement with the 'Stop Cop City' movement.

In the two years since their arrests, several RICO defendants have filed civil lawsuits to meet the two-year statute of limitations in Georgia. To date, six lawsuits have been filed for claims ranging from false and retaliatory arrest to unlawful detention and selective prosecution. RICO defendants also allege their First and Fourth Amendment rights were violated in the process. The prosecution has also been accused of recording and publishing confidential attorney-client communications as part of the discovery.

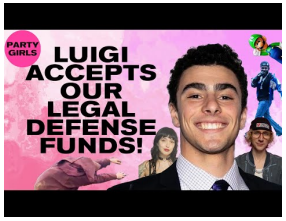
Jamie Marsicano, who was arrested on March 5, 2023, filed a federal lawsuit seeking damages against officers responsible for the South River Forest arrests and the City of Atlanta for "implementing an unlawful, blanket policy of arresting and pretextually charging individuals perceived to be protesting Cop City."

Marsicano's defense attorneys say they've documented a number of incidents where pretextual charges have occurred under the city's policy, and further argue it is because of this policy that law enforcement killed Manuel Esteban Paez Terán, or 'Tortuguita' on January 18th, 2023.

'The Police Terrorized us': Details about the March 5 arrests

On March 5, 2023, over a thousand people gathered in Weelaunee People's Park—a then-public space also known as Intrenchment Creek Park, about a mile away from the Cop City construction site—to attend the South River Music Festival, which was organized as part of a broader week of action to support the Stop Cop City movement. At about 5:30 p.m., police and construction vehicles were set on fire at the construction site. Around an hour or so later, police entered the music festival grounds and began making indiscriminate arrests.

As reported in *Mainline* and the *Appeal*, officers "did not communicate or give clear orders to attendees, including elderly individuals and children."



Luigi Mangione recently accepted nearly $300,000 of crowdfunded donations from the December 4 Legal Committee. Check out *Party Girls* for more info on this development.

Midwest Books to Prisoners recently published a call to support Dandelion, who is currently going through the court system.

The New Republic recently published a major article on the Atlanta Cop City RICO charges. For those who can't access the article due to paywalls, a paywall-free version can be found here. From the article:

> When the SWAT team beat down his front door in the early hours of May 31, 2023, Marlon Kautz's first thought was that it was a mistake. His second thought was that he might die.
>
> From his bedroom, Kautz heard the officers debating whether or not to toss a flash-bang grenade into the living room. The house was surrounded by officers in tactical gear, toting assault rifles, from the Atlanta Police Department and the Georgia Bureau of Investigation. Kautz shouted to the officers that he was coming out, his hands raised. "We kept repeating that we were unarmed," he told me, as he and his roommates walked out of their rooms as calmly as possible. They were immediately arrested, placed in separate squad cars, and taken to jail, where they were held for the next four days as police "ransacked" their house, searching for evidence to support their case that the group had engaged in charity fraud and money laundering in connection to the "Stop Cop City" movement, a sprawling protest and activism campaign aimed at halting the construction of the massive Atlanta Public Safety Training Center outside the city.
>
> Kautz, alongside his roommates and colleagues Adele MacLean and Savannah Patterson, are members of a nonprofit organization called the Atlanta Solidarity Fund, which has supported local protest movements since 2016 by providing arrested activists with bail funds and legal resources. Their case is an extreme example of how a motivated and militarized government can crack down on protest, dissent, and the civil rights of everyday citizens en masse.
>
> In Atlanta, the raid was a response to years of activism against police violence surrounding "Cop City," the center's nickname. But in conversations with *The New Republic*, legal experts and activists alike said that, in Donald Trump's second administration, what happened that morning in Atlanta may soon play out all over the country. While our new and former president is known for his high-profile spats with boldface media names, the second Trump administration's assault on free speech won't start with CNN but with hundreds, if not thousands, of activists like Kautz across the country, as federal forces seize the precedent that repressive state governments like Georgia's have been using for years. That dystopian future isn't far away: New legislation in Congress and new legal cases against groups outside of Georgia show that the right is already devising new tools to stamp out what scant agency Americans have left.
>
> "What's happening in Atlanta is a vision of the future," Kautz told me. "This is a test run of a [repressive] playbook that authorities on many different levels are experimenting with to discover what they can get away with."
>
> In other Cop City news, the *Atlanta Community Press Collective* has a report up about Jamie Marsicano, who is launching a federal lawsuit against the Atlanta Police Department. From the report:
>
> Attorneys de Janon and Drago Cepar, Jr. filed the lawsuit on behalf of Jamie Marsicano in the United States District Court for the Northern District of Georgia. It asserts six different civil rights claims, including for violations of the First and Fourth Amendments, against the City of Atlanta and individual defendants with the Atlanta Police Department (APD), the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, and the Department of Natural Resources, among other agencies. The complaint alleges that "defendants were recklessly and callously indifferent to [Marsicano's] federally protected rights."
>
> Marsicano, who alternatively uses she/her and they/them pronouns, was arrested on March 5, 2023, during a multi-agency police raid of a music festival in Atlanta's South River Forest, or the Weelaunee Forest by its Mvskoke name. Marsicano and 22 others arrested that night were charged with domestic terrorism and later with violating the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO) in a sweeping indictment that resulted in racketeering charges against 61 people alleged to be part of the Stop Cop City protest movement.
>
> The complaint alleges that APD Chief Schierbaum created a policy of pursuing "pretextual criminal charges against 'Stop Cop City' protesters." The policy has resulted in "an express instruction" that officers with APD and other agencies arrest and charge Cop City protesters, "particularly if they are close or present at the Weelaunee Forest," according to the complaint.

Read the full report here. Lastly, there is a new report about surveillance cameras being put up outside of the homes of Stop Cop City activists.

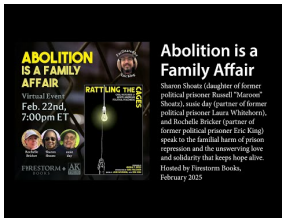
The Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee is asking people to support Bobby Mason, a Diné Warrior detained in Flagstaff

prisoner Alex Stokes recently had his sentence upheld in court, and the Upstate Correctional Facility where he is held is currently on lockdown. You can write to him at:

Alexander Contompasis 22B5028
Upstate Correctional Facility
PO Box 2001
Malone, NY, 12953

Chicano anarchist prisoner Xinachtli recently published a statement speaking on the People's Tribunal on Rojava vs Turkey.

The *Rattling the Cages* series of talks continues, with anarchist ex-political prisoner Eric King recently hosting an event titled "Abolition is a Family Affair" bringing together his own family with those of Russell Maroon Shoatz and Laura Whitehorn. You can watch it here:


ABOLITION IS A FAMILY AFFAIR
Virtual Event
Feb. 22nd, 7:00pm ET
RATTLING THE CAGES
Abolition is a Family Affair
Sharon Shoatz (daughter of former political prisoner Russell "Maroon" Shoatz), sonic day (partner of former political prisoner Laura Whitehorn), and Rochelle Bricker (partner of former political prisoner Eric King) speak to the familial harm of prison repression and the unswerving love and solidarity that keeps hope alive. Hosted by Firestorm Books, February 2025
FIRESTORM BOOKS

The next event in the series will be "Looking Back at the George Jackson Brigade," and will go live on March 22nd. Eric King and Josh Davidson also recently appeared on *The Beautiful Idea* podcast to discuss anti-repression and prisoner support organizing. Printable zines of all previous *Rattling the Cages* talks can be found here, and all previous talks can be watched through the Firestorm Books youtube page.

Peppy, a long-time activist facing charges stemming from a protest against an anti-LGBTQ+ bigot, has been moved to a new facility in Ohio. Supporters can write to him here:

Brian DiPippa #66590-510
FCI Elkton
P.O. Box 10
Lisbon, OH 44432

Mongoose Distro has published new writing by anarchist and reproductive rights prisoner Caleb Freestone, which is available as a printable zine here. You can donate to help support Caleb here. From Caleb:

Mississippi really is beautiful. The crab grass planted at the prison's construction is losing a protracted war to clover, wild lettuce, dandelion, and these gnarly purple flowers unknown to me. There are ancient trees in the distance, painted skies in the mornings and evenings; birds and skunks defy the barbed wire as voles excavate their burrows below. Yazoo City once burned to the ground thanks to the ghost of a witch burned at the stake seeking revenge. The rebuilt downtown was ravaged again by Walmart and now stands abandoned. Humans have not fared well here since Europeans brought genocide to the land. Yet that evil has only soaked as deep as the roots of the alien grass being routed by wild flowers yearning to be free.

I read. I write. I pretend heating instant noodles is cooking. I work out. I sift through the lies on CNN and Fox. I dream. I speak of the world as it could be. But mostly I learn. Here in the rotting carcass of this empire, there is such creativity, resilience, faith; we practice mutual aid and solidarity every day. We know who the enemy is. "Nothing in prison is free" was the first and biggest lie from a guard. Our bodies may not be free, but most of our possessions were gifts from one another, paid for in gratitude and reciprocity. The only things for sale are restricted or banned. Artificial scarcity is key to capitalism. Everyone is worse off for having come here, yet there are valuable lesson in the extraordinary nature of our humanity. These lessons are simply disdained by a society which worships domination and greed.

The First Step Act and Good Time Credit will qualify me for release on April 10, 2025 as long as I am not written up. But they will hold me months past this date. The Second Chance Act already qualified me for a halfway house the day after I arrived. However, they keep making up excuses to delay the paperwork. The BOP has no discretion - these Acts are law. In practice, the BOP holds folx as long as they can. Over incarceration lawsuits will not win enough to cover lawyers' fees unless one has been illegally held for over a year too long. So I remain in the belly of the beast at Yazoo City, Low 1, separated from my spouse and my community along with 1,100 others who deserve dignity and liberation as well. Meanwhile, states are criminalizing abortion and "fake clinics" continue to trick and manipulate folx from seeking actual medical care.

Please consider writing me, recommending books, sharing the details of our case, speaking up for bodily autonomy and the abolition of prison, distributing copies of this essay, and supporting my spouse and I:

chuffed.org/project/visitcalebf

Cashapp - $JadeF64

Instagram - @FTLauderdaleFoodNotBombs, @SolidarityFTL

Write to Caleb here:

Caleb Freestone #07786-506
FCI Yazoo City Low
P.O. BOX 5000
Yazoo City, MS 39194

The support team for Mexican Indigenous anarchist prisoner Miguel Peralta are fundraising or his legal costs, and recently organized a fundraising raffle.

Atlanta IWOC recently held a successful fundraising drive to help Virgin Island 3 prisoner Hanif Shabazz Bey stay connected and able to pay for phone calls.

Ongoing Cases

Witnesses also reported that police "pointed lights and guns into a children's bounce house." That night, police detained a total of 35 people, including a legal observer from the National Lawyers Guild. Of those, 23 were arrested for domestic terrorism and taken to DeKalb County Jail where they were held for months without bond. A total of 42 people have been arrested on domestic terrorism charges and five have so far been indicted for domestic terrorism.

"Captivity is an experience I will never forget," says Victor Puertas, who was arrested while attending the music festival and has since been charged with RICO. "All I had been through and knew at that time was that I had been arrested in an extremely violent manner and that I had been charged with the most bogus and punitive charges possible: domestic terrorism and RICO."

Other Lawsuits Filed

Another RICO defendant who was arrested on March 5, 2023 filed a lawsuit on Wednesday. Three RICO defendants who were arrested on January 18, 2023, the same day that police murdered Tortuguita, previously filed civil lawsuits for false arrest, unlawful detention, and malicious prosecution. An additional RICO defendant, Hannah Kass, who was arrested on May 12, 2022, after attending a protest at an office of Cop City contractor Brasfield & Gorie, also filed a civil lawsuit.

"I filed a civil lawsuit because I believe it is critically important for us as targeted forest defenders to push back against the state's authoritarian repression of the Stop Cop City movement," said Kass, who filed their lawsuit in May 2024. "The state must be held accountable and dissuaded from continuing to use police terror, random false arrests and detention, malicious prosecution, and other civil rights violations as tools of abuse against those who disagree with state actions."

Kass' experience is just one example of how the process of arrest, incarceration, and awaiting trial on serious charges has had a devastating impact on the lives of dozens of activists. "As a result of my arrest, I have been scarred with continual post-traumatic stress and reputational harm," continued Kass. "I have been hospitalized and medicated due to panic and paranoia. I was doxxed and harassed by right-wing media pundits and trolls, and subsequently subjected to a disciplinary hearing by my university's conduct office."

For more information on the sweeping RICO criminal case and ways to support the defendants and the movement to Stop Cop City visit: weelauneethefree.org. A tour across the US has also been announced about pushing back against repression of Stop Cop City activists. See more info here.

Abolish Rent: A Discussion with Tracy Rosenthal and Leonardo Vilch from the the LA Tenants Union

March 7, 2025

In this episode of *The Beautiful Idea*, we speak with Tracy Rosenthal and Leonardo Vilchis, two tenant organizers in Los Angeles, CA, involved in the Los Angeles Tenant Union (LATU), and co-authors of the new book, *Abolish Rent: How Tenants Can End the Housing Crisis*. From the publisher:

"Rent drives millions into debt, despair, and onto the streets. The social cost of rent is too damn high. Written for anyone fed up with the permanent housing crisis, complicit politicians, and real estate greed, Abolish Rent dissects our housing system from the perspective of those it immiserates. Through unsparing analysis and striking stories of resistance, it shows us how tenants can, through organizing and collective action, harness our power and win the housing we deserve.

From two co-founders of the largest tenants union in the country, this deeply reported account of the resurgent tenant movement centers poor and working-class people who are fighting back, staying put, and remaking the city in the process. Authors Tracy Rosenthal and Leonardo Vilchis take us to trilingual strategy meetings, raucous marches against gentrification, and daring eviction defenses where immigrants put their lives on the line. These are the seeds of the revolutionary movement we need to make our housing, our cities, and the world our home."

During our discussion, we cover the growing crisis around rent and housing and how landlords and politicians have attempted to shift the discussion onto attacks on migrants and the houseless. We cover how the Los Angeles Tenants Union and the wider Autonomous Tenant Union Network have grown to build a grassroots, tenant led autonomous movement, aimed at building power on a neighborhood level.

cover photo via Instagram

In Contempt #50: National Guard Sent in to New York Prisons, Leonard Peltier Comes Home

March 6, 2025

In this column, we present our monthly roundup of political prisoner, prison rebel, and repression news, happenings, announcements, action and analysis. Packed in as always are updates, fundraisers, and birthdays.

There's a lot happening, so let's *dive right in!*

HALT Act Suspended as New York Prisons See Uprisings As National Guard Called in During Guard Strike

New York prison guards beat another man to death.

— Read the book Starting Somewhere (@jphillll.bsky.social) 2025-03-03T00:36:21.367Z

In recent weeks, guards in New York prisons have launched a large wildcat strike, leading the New York Governor to call in thousands of National Guard soldiers to help run the prisons and put prisoners on lockdown - shutting off basic programs, showers, access to legal resources, medical treatment, and visitation. As the strike by guards has grown, seven prisoners have now died and several prisons in New York have seen ongoing unrest and protests.

The strike isn't taking place in a vacuum, but against a backdrop of a growing anger at prison guards following the horrific and brutal killing of Robert Brooks in December of 2024. Many prisoners and support groups are now decrying the strike by guards as a "distraction by officers who don't want greater oversight." Guards are chiefly angry at:

> [T]he Humane Alternatives to Long-Term Solitary Confinement Act or HALT, that place[s] some limits on the use of solitary confinement in state prisons. The guards staged the work stoppage, which affected all but one of the 42 state prisons, based on their claim that the minimal limitations on the use of this barbaric practice shifted the balance of power between them and the inmates in favor of the latter. The unspoken subtext is that it weakened the guards' ability to impose control by terror, supposedly creating an unsafe environment for them.
>
> In addition to opposition to HALT, which the union has sought to repeal from its inception, the immediate trigger of the guards' wildcat strike was the indictment of 10 guards and other prison staff in the brutal beating resulting in the death of a 43-year-old inmate, Robert Brooks, at the Marcy Correctional Facility, near Utica, last December. The incident was unintentionally recorded on guards' body-cams.

As *Gothamist* reported:

> As incarcerated people report deteriorating conditions because of the walkouts, the guards protesting outside have voiced several grievances of their own. In interviews with public media, many of the strikers blamed the problems on the 2021 HALT Solitary law, which limits the amount of time a person can be held in solitary confinement and requires due process before a commitment can begin. It also mandates that any incarcerated individual be allowed at least four hours out of their cells each day and bars staff from putting pregnant and disabled prisoners in solitary confinement... Corrections officers and their supporters argue that the law makes it harder for them to maintain discipline and segregate violent people from the general population.
>
> The [HALT Solitary law] measure's supporters, however, argue that solitary confinement is akin to torture, and that restrictions on it are necessary to shield incarcerated people from excessive cruelty in the system. Before the law's passage, prisoners could be confined to a cell for up to 23 hours a day. HALT supporters were outraged when, on Thursday, DOCCS Commissioner Daniel Martuscello suspended provisions of the law in a memo to the striking officers.
>
> " What rights are we going to suspend next?" said Jerome Wright, a previously incarcerated man and now co-director of the HALT Solitary Campaign, who blamed Hochul for allowing the directive. Wright said the provisions of HALT haven't been fully implemented, and abuse remains common across the prison system. He argued the walkouts are a distraction from the indictments handed up this week in the Brooks case.

The *Community Resource Hub* has produced a short explainer looking at the guard "strike" in the New York prison system that's led to the National Guard being sent in. At least two uprisings have also taken place in the NY system in recent weeks, at Collins Correctional Facility and Riverview. At Riverview, prisoners "took control of multiple dormitories for several hours."

> SEVEN prisoners died during a 2 week wildcat strike by New York state prison guards who wanted to overturn aspects of the HALT act limiting solitary confinement - the latest a 22 year old whom other prisoners say was brutally beaten by guards: www.nytimes.com/2025/03/04/n.
>
> — Piper French (@psfrench.bsky.social) 2025-03-04T10:32:06.884Z

As the New York Governor and the labor union representing the prison guards has negotiated an end to the strike, this has led to the New York DOCCS suspending the HALT Solitary Confinement Act. As one call to action explains:

> On February 20th, the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) initiated widespread lockdowns and canceled personal and legal visits indefinitely at all New York State prisons, further isolating incarcerated people and cutting them off from the vital support of loved ones and attorneys, and illegally indefinitely suspended provisions of the HALT Solitary Confinement Act, a law passed by a supermajority of lawmakers and signed by the Governor.
>
> Incarcerated people are locked down in their cells upwards of 24 hours a day, and are suffering delayed or denied access to food, medication, mental health and medical care, heat, electricity, showers, commissary, religious services, college and educational classes and other vital programs and basic needs. These denials of basic rights and necessities are on top of ongoing rampant staff physical and sexual abuse of incarcerated people. Now, they are also being denied the basic human right to see and speak with their families and legal counsel - and, for those in solitary, even fellow incarcerated people.
>
> The suspension of provisions in HALT and cancellation of visits follows an unlawful work stoppage and accompanying protests by rogue corrections officers who abandoned their posts, causing grave harm to people in New York's prisons, imperiling people's health and lives, and compelling the Governor to deploy the National Guard to do their jobs for them.
>
> The timing of this strike is no coincidence. The actions of these corrections officers are an attempt to sabotage necessary reforms and shield themselves from accountability for violence they perpetrate inside prisons. It is intended to deflect attention from a moment of reckoning for New York's violent prison system and culture of impunity as DOCCS' officers have just been charged for their brutal torture and murder of Robert Brooks at Marcy Correctional Facility.
>
> Robert Brooks was a 43-year-old Black father with a family and community who cared deeply about him. As seen by the business-as-usual manner in which officers and medical staff tortured and killed Robert on video, his murder was not an anomaly but emblematic of routine racist brutality inflicted throughout New York's prisons and jails. For years and decades, officers have beaten and killed Black people in New York's prisons - including Leonard Strickland, Samuel Harrell, Karl Taylor, Terry Cooper, John McMillon, and countless others - and yet the racist system of brutality continues unabated.
>
> There have been countless investigative reports of a "scourge of racial bias" and routine and frequent brutal beatings covered up by locking people in solitary confinement on false charges. Even just since Robert's killing, there have been reports of other people beaten and killed by officers and people being locked down systematically.

Another collective letter on solitary confinement in the NY system can be found here. At the time of this writing, the New York Governor has announced a tentative agreement, ending the strike. According to the *New York Times*:

> On Thursday, Gov. Kathy Hochul announced that the state had reached a deal with leaders of the corrections officers' union to end the work stoppage by Saturday. The deal included a 90-day suspension of a state law that restricts the use of long-term solitary confinement; limits on mandatory overtime for officers; and a promise not to discipline guards who returned to work before the deadline.
>
> In the meantime, visits by inmates' lawyers, family members and friends have remained discontinued along with nonessential medical appointments, early release programs and prisoner classes.
>
> Late last year, guards at Marcy Correctional Facility were captured on body-worn cameras beating a handcuffed man to death, a jarring episode that advocates for inmate rights and prison watchdog groups said reflected a widespread culture of brutality behind the walls of the state's prisons.
>
> And on Saturday, another inmate at a facility across the street, 22-year-old Messiah Nantwi, died after an incident in which other inmates said he was beaten by corrections officers. Eleven corrections staff members involved in the incident were placed on administrative leave while the State Police and other agencies investigate the death, said Thomas Mailey, a prisons spokesman.
>
> Early on, at Auburn Correctional Facility west of Syracuse, an inmate named Jonathan Grant pleaded for medical attention, other prisoners said, but help never came. On Feb. 22, Mr. Grant, 61, who had a history of strokes, was found dead in his cell.
>
> Mason Earle, a 26-year-old inmate at Auburn, described another incident during the strike when someone in his unit began having chest pains. Mr. Earle said he and others shouted for help until the man was taken away in a wheelchair. A short time later, his cell was cleared out. It was not clear what became of him, but soon after, officials announced another death at the facility, that of Jeffery Bair, 40, who was found unconscious in his cell on Feb. 24 and could not be revived.
>
> ...[S]ome prisoners began falling ill during the strikes, prompting other inmates to shout in unison, "Medical emergency! Medical emergency!" and bang on the cell gates to get the attention of anyone who could help. Mr. Colon said at least three men were wheeled out of his unit after medical episodes. When prisoners at Sing Sing were let out for recreation after a week of being confined to one unit, one of them, Anthony Douglas, 66, remained behind. He was found hanging dead in his cell just after 4 p.m. on Wednesday. Four hours later, another man, Franklyn Dominguez, 35, died after he, too, was found unresponsive in his cell.

Political Prisoner News

Long-term Indigenous political prisoner Leonard Peltier has finally been released to home confinement after 49 years of incarceration. You can watch Leonard's homecoming speech here, as well as a press conference with Leonard's attorneys here, and a welcome home event hosted by the NDN Collective. Check out a report here from *Unicorn Riot*.

In less positive news, antifascist